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DEVOUT EXERCISES

OF

THE HEART,

IN MEDITATION AND SOLILOQUY, PRAYER
AND PRAISE.

BY THE LATE PIOUS AND INGENIOUS

MRS. ELIZABETH ROWE.

EDITED BY ISAAC WATTS, D.D.

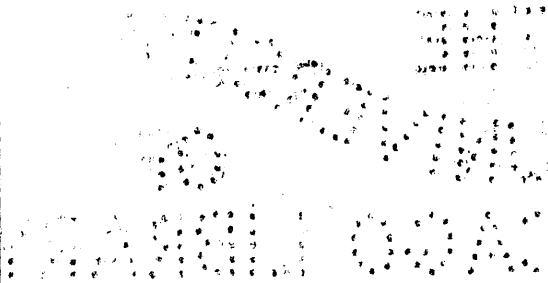
REVISED BY THOS. O. SUMMERS, D.D.

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Biographical Introduction.

It may serve to give the reader a greater interest in the valuable contents of this little volume, to say something about its estimable author.

Elizabeth Singer was born in 1674, at Ilchester, Somersetshire, England. She was married to Mr. Thomas Rowe in 1710, and was left a widow in 1715. She possessed remarkable graces and endowments of body and mind.

She became an author in early life,

writing under the name of "Philomela." Her first poetical compositions were written at the age of twelve. Her whole soul seemed to be filled with the spirit of sentiment and song. She could hardly write a familiar letter, without rising into the style of rapturous poetry. In the twenty-second year of her age, she published, at the request of her friends, a collection of her poems. At the instance of Bishop Ken, she wrote a "Paraphrase on the Thirty-eighth chapter of Job," which greatly increased her reputation. After the death of her husband, she wrote the most celebrated of her works, "Friendship in Death"—the design of which was, by addresses to the affections and imagination, to familiarize the mind with the doctrine of immortality, as one of the firm and indispensable foundations of piety

and virtue. She wrote "Letters, Moral and Entertaining," in which, by fictitious examples, she inculcated the cultivation of the heroic virtues and benevolent affections. She also cast the history of Joseph into a poetic form.

But perhaps her most useful production is the present volume, "Devout Exercises of the Heart"—a work which has secured the endorsement of pious Christians of every class. It is not necessary for us to say any thing in its commendation, as what we might be inclined to advance is so well expressed by the Reverend Doctor Watts in his admirable Preface.

Mrs. Rowe lived in constant communion with God, having her conversation in heaven, until the fervent desire of her heart was granted her, in her translation

to that world of purity and joy for which she possessed so rare a meetness. She died of apoplexy, February 20, 1736.

THOS. O. SUMMERS.

NASHVILLE, Tenn., April 3, 1855.

P R E F A C E .

BY ISAAC WATTS, D.D.

THE admirable author of these devotional pages has been in high esteem among the ingenious and polite, since so many excellent fruits of her pen, both in verse and prose, have appeared in public. She was early honored under the feigned name of *Philomela*, before the world was allowed to know Miss Elizabeth Singer, by the name drawn from her family, or that of Mrs. Rowe, which she acquired by marriage.

Though many of her writings that were published in her lifetime discovered a pious and heavenly temper, and a warm zeal for religion and virtue, yet she chose to conceal the *devotions of her heart*, till she got beyond the censure and the applause of mortals. It was enough that God, whom

she loved with ardent and supreme affection, was witness to all her secret and intense breathings after him.

In February last, he was pleased to call her out of our world, and take her to himself. Some time after her decease, these manuscripts were transmitted to me, all enclosed in one sheet of paper, and directed to me at Newington, by her own hand. In the midst of them I found her letter, which entreated me to review them and commit them to the press. This letter I have thought necessary to show the world, not so much to discover my right to publish these papers, as to let the reader see something more of that holy and heavenly character which she maintained in a uniform manner, both in life and death.

It is now almost thirty years ago since I was honored with her acquaintance; nor could her great modesty conceal all her shining graces and accomplishments; but it is not my province to give a particular account of this excellent woman, who has blessed and adorned our nation and our age. I expect her temper, her conduct,

and her virtues, will be set in a just and pleasing light among the memoirs of her life, by some near relations, to whom the care of her poetical pieces, and her familiar letters, is committed.

These *Devout Exercises* are animated with such fire as seems to speak the language of holy passion, and discovers them to be the dictates of her heart; and those who were favored with her chief intimacy will most readily believe it. The style, I confess, is raised above that of common meditation or soliloquy; but let it be remembered, she was no common Christian. As her virtues were sublime, so her genius was bright and sparkling; and the vivacity of her imagination had a tincture of the muse almost from her childhood. This made it natural to her to express the inward sentiments of her soul in more exalted language, and to paint her own ideas in metaphor and rapture, near akin to the diction of poesy.

The reader will here find a spirit, dwelling in flesh, elevated into divine raptures, congenial^d to those of angels and unbodied

minds. Her intense love to her God kindles at every hint, and transcends the limits of mortality. I scarce ever met with any devotional writings which give us an example of a soul, at special seasons, so far raised above every thing that is not immortal and divine.

Yet she is conscious of her frailties too. She sometimes confesses her folly and her guilt in the sight of God, in the most affecting language of deep humiliation. It is with a pathetic sensibility of her weakness, and in the strongest language of self-displacence, she bewails her offences against her Creator and Redeemer; and in her intervals of darkness, she vents her painful complaints and mournings for the absence of her highest and best Beloved.

It should be remembered, there is nothing to be found here which rises above our ideas. Here are none of those absurd and incomprehensible phrases which amuse the ear with sounding vanity, and hold reason in sovereign contempt. Here are no visionary scenes of wild extravagance, no affections of the tumid and unmeaning

style, which spreads a glaring confusion over the understanding; nothing that leads the reader into the region of those mystical shadows and darkness which abound in the Romish writers, under the pretence of refined light and sublime ecstasy. Nor is the character of this ingenious author to be blemished with any other reproaches, which have been sometimes cast on such sort of meditations.

In common life she was affable and friendly with persons of every rank and degree; and in her later years, as she drew nearer to heaven, if she avoided any thing, it was grandeur and public appearances on earth. But she never so concealed and abstracted herself from the society of any of her fellow-creatures, as to despise the meanest of her species. She ever was kind and compassionate to the distressed, and largely liberal to the indigent. Nor did she neglect the daily duties of human life, under a vain imagination that she moved in a higher sphere, and was seraphically exalted above them.

Though there is not one complete copy

of verses among all these transports of her soul, yet she ever carried with her a relish of poesy even into her sacred retirements. Sometimes she springs her flight from a line or two of verse, which her memory had impressed upon her heart: sometimes, from the midst of her religious elevations, she lights down upon a few lines of some modern poet, even Herbert, as well as Milton, etc., though it is but seldom she cites their names. At other times, the verse seems to be the effusion of her own rapturous thoughts in sudden melody and metre—or at least I know not whence the lines are copied; but she most frequently does me the honor to make use of some of my writings in verse, in these holy meditations of her heart. Blessed be that God who has so far favored any thing my pen could produce, as to assist so sublime a devotion.

From the different appearance of the paper and ink in some of these pieces, as well as from the early transcripts of several of them among her friends, it is evident they were written in her younger days: others are of a much later original, though

there is but one that bears a date, and that is April 30, 1735. They seemed to have been penned at special seasons and occasions throughout the course of her life. A few of them bear the corrections or additions of her own pen, which discovers itself by a little difference of the handwriting.

Though these writings give us the aspirations of a devout soul in her holy retirements, when she has no design to present the public with them, yet they did not want a great deal of adjustment or correction in order to see the light. The numbers and the titles are added by the publisher, as well as the breaks and pauses, which give a sort of rest to the reader's mind, and make the review more easy. Here and there a too venturous flight is a little moderated: sometimes a meditation or a sentence is completed, which seemed very imperfect, or a short line or two inserted to introduce the sense, where the language seemed too abrupt, or the meaning too obscure. Her soul had a large set of ideas in present view, which made every expression she used easy and perspicuous to herself, when she wrote

only for her own use, though sometimes her entire sense might not be quite so obvious to every reader, without a little introduction into her tract of sentiments. Upon the whole, I must acknowledge, I was very unwilling that this excellent work should lose any degree of elegance or brightness by passing through my hands.

When the manuscript came first under my revision, I read it over with the eye of a critic and a friend, that I might publish it with honor to the hand that wrote it, and with religious entertainment and advantage to the world; nor was this employment destitute of its proper satisfaction. But never did I feel the true pleasure of these meditations till I had finished this labor of the *head*, and began to read them over again as *devout exercises of the heart*: then I endeavored to enter more entirely into the spirit of the pious author, and attempted to assume her language as my own. But how much superior was the satisfaction which I received from this review, especially wheresoever I had reason to hope I could pronounce her words with sincerity

of soul ! How happily did this raise and entertain all my pleasing passions, and give me another sort of delight than the dry, critical perusal of them, in order to judge concerning their propriety ! But I confess also it was an abasing and mortifying thought, when I found how often I was constrained to drop the sublime expression from my lips, or forbid my tongue to use it, because my own attainments sank so far beneath those sacred elevations of spirit, and fell so far short of those transcendent degrees of divine affection and zeal.

Let me persuade all that peruse this book, to make the same experiment that I have done ; and when they have shut out the world, and are reading in their retirements, let them try how far they can speak this language and assume these sentiments as their own ; and by aspiring to follow them, may they find the same satisfaction and delight, or at least learn the profitable lesson of self-abasement and holy shame ; and may a noble and glorious ambition excite in their breast a sacred zeal to emulate so

illustrious an example. Whatsoever ardors of divine love have been kindled in a soul united to flesh and blood, may also be kindled, by the same influence of grace, in other spirits, laboring under the same clogs and impediments.

But perhaps it will be necessary here to give a caution to some humble Christians, that they should not make these higher elevations of piety and holy joy, the test and standard by which to judge of the sincerity of their own religion. Ten thousand saints are arrived at Paradise, who have not been favored, like St. Paul, with a rapture into the third heaven, nor could ever arise to the affectionate transports and devout joys of Mrs. Rowe; yet I hope all serious readers may find something here, which, through the aid of the blessed Spirit, may raise them above their usual pitch, may give a new spring to their religious pleasures and their immortal hopes, and thereby render their lives more holy and heavenly.

That the publication of this little book may be favored with the Divine blessing for this happy end, is the sincere desire and

request of the publisher, as it was the real motive of the ingenious and pious writer, to commit them, by my hand, to the public view. This sufficiently discovers itself in the following letter :

“ To the Rev. Dr. Watts, at Newington.

“SIR:—The opinion I have of your piety and judgment, is the reason of my giving you the trouble of looking over these papers, in order to publish them, which I desire you to do as soon as you can conveniently: only you have full liberty to suppress what you think proper.

“I think there can be no vanity in this design; for I am sensible such thoughts as these will not be for the taste of the modish part of the world; and before they appear, I shall be entirely disinterested in the censure or applause of mortals.

“The reflections were occasionally written, and only for my improvement; but I am not without hopes that they may have the same effect on some pious minds, as the reading the experiences of others hath had on my soul. The experimental part of re-

ligion has generally a greater influence than its theory ; and if, when I am sleeping in the dust, these soliloquies should kindle a flame of divine love in the heart of the lowest and most despised Christian, be the glory given to the great Spring of all grace and benignity.

“I have now done with mortal things, and all to come is vast eternity. Eternity! how transporting the sound! As long as God exists, my being and happiness is there secure. These unbounded desires, which the wide creation cannot limit, shall be satisfied for ever. I shall drink at the fountain head of pleasure, and be refreshed with the emanations of original life and joy. I shall hear the voice of uncreated harmony, speaking peace and ineffable consolation to my soul.

“I expect eternal life, not as a reward of merit, but a pure act of bounty. Detesting myself in every view I can take, I fly to the righteousness and atonement of my great Redeemer, for pardon and salvation : this is my only consolation and hope. ‘Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O

Lord! for in thy sight shall no flesh be justified."

"Through the blood of the Lamb I hope for an entire victory over the last enemy, and that before this comes to you I shall have reached the celestial heights; and while you are reading these lines, I shall be adoring before the throne of God, where faith shall be turned into vision, and these languishing desires satisfied with the full fruition of immortal love. Adieu!

"ELIZABETH ROWE."



DEVOUT EXERCISES.

I. SUPREME LOVE TO GOD.

WHY, O my God, must this mortal structure put so great a separation between my soul and thee? I am surrounded with thy essence, yet I cannot perceive thee: I follow thee, and trace thy footsteps in heaven and earth, yet I cannot overtake thee: thou art before me, and I perceive thee not.

O thou, whom, unseen, I love, by what powerful influence dost thou attract my soul? The eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive what thou art; and yet I love thee beyond all that my eye has seen, or my ear heard: beyond all that my heart can comprehend. Thou dwellest in the heights of glory, to which no human thought can soar, and yet thou art more near and intimate to my soul than any of the objects of sense.

These ears have never heard thy voice, and yet I am better acquainted with thee, and can rely on thee with more confidence, than on the dearest friend I have on the earth.

My heart cleaves to thee, O Lord, as its only refuge, and finds in thee a secret and constant spring of consolation. I speak to thee with the utmost confidence, and think thy being my greatest happiness. The reflection on thy existence and greatness recreates my spirits, and fills my heart with alacrity: my soul overflows with pleasure: I rejoice, I triumph in thy independent blessedness and absolute dominion. Reign, O my God, for ever, glorious and uncontrolled!

I, a worm of the earth, would join my assent with the infinite orders above, with all thy flaming ministers who rejoice in thy kingdom and glory.

Though not with them, thy happier race, allow'd
To view the bright unveil'd Divinity;
(By no audacious glance from mortal eyes
Those mystic glories are to be profaned;)
But yet I feel the same immortal flame,
And love thee, though unseen.

I love thee. Thus far I can speak, but

all the rest is unutterable; and I must leave the pleasing tale untold, until I can talk in the language of immortality; and then I'll begin the transporting story, which shall never come to an end, but be still and still beginning; for thy beauties, O thou fairest of ten thousand! will still be new, and shall kindle fresh ardor in my soul to all eternity. The sacred flame shall rise, nor find any limits till thy perfections find a period.

I love thee; and, O thou that knowest all things, read the characters that love has drawn on my heart. What excellence but thine, in heaven or earth, could raise such aspirations of soul, such sublime and fervent affections, as those I feel? What could fix my heart but boundless perfection? what is there else for whose sake I could despise all created glory? why am I not at rest here among sensible enjoyments? whence arise these importunate longings, these infinite desires? why does not the complete creation satisfy, or at least delude me with a dream of happiness? why do not the objects of sense awake a more ardent sentiment than things distant and invisible? why should I, "who say to corruption, Thou art my father,"

aspire after a union with the immense Divinity?

Ye angels of God, who behold his face, explain to me the sacred mystery: tell me how this heavenly flame began, unriddle its wondrous generation. Who hath animated this mortal frame with celestial fire, and given a clod of earth this Divine ambition? what could kindle it but the breath of God, which kindles up my soul? and to thee, its amiable original, it ascends! it breaks through all created perfection, and keeps on its restless course to the first pattern of beauty.

Ye flowery varieties of the earth, and ye sparkling glories of the skies, your blandishments are vain, while I pursue an excellence that casts a reproach on all your glory. I would fain close my eyes on all the various and lovely appearances you present, and would open them on a brighter scene. I have desires which nothing visible can gratify, to which no material things are suitable. O when shall I find objects more entirely agreeable to my intellectual faculties! My soul springs forward in pursuit of a distant good, whom I follow by some faint ray of light,

which only glimmers by short intervals before me. O when will it disperse the clouds, and break out in full splendor on my soul!

But what will the open vision of thy beauties effect, if, while thou art but faintly imagined, I love thee with such a sacred fervor! to what blessed heights shall my admiration rise, when I shall behold thee in full perfection—when I shall see thee as thou art, exalted in majesty, and complete in beauty! how shall I triumph then in thy glory, and in the privileges of my own being! what ineffable thoughts will rise, to find myself united to the all-sufficient Divinity, by ties which the sons of men have no names to express! by an engagement that the revolution of eternal ages shall not dissolve! The league of nature shall be broken, and the laws of the mingled elements be cancelled; but my relation to the Almighty God shall stand fixed and unchangeable as his own existence: “Nor life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, shall ever separate me from his love.”

Triumph, O my soul, and rejoice: look

forward beyond the period of all terrestrial things. Look beyond ten thousand ages of celestial blessedness: look forward still, and take an immeasurable prospect: press on, and leave unnumbered ages behind, ages of ineffable peace and pleasure: plunge at once into the ocean of bliss, and call eternity itself thy own.

There are no limits to the prospects of my joy: it runs parallel with the duration of the infinite Divinity: my bliss is without bounds: O when shall the full possession of it commence!



II. THE TRUTH AND GOODNESS OF GOD.

ENGRAVED as in eternal brass,
 The mighty promise shines;
 Nor can the powers of darkness raze
 Those everlasting lines.

The sacred word of grace is strong
 As that which built the skies:
 The voice that rolls the stars along
 Speaks all the promises.

And they are all built on the immutable truth and goodness of thy nature. Thou dost

not speak at random, like vain man; but whatever thou hast engaged to perform is the result of eternal counsel and design. Thou hast uttered nothing that thou canst see occasion to alter on a second review: thou canst promise nothing to thy own damage, nor be a loser by thy utmost liberality. Thou art every way qualified to make good thy engagements, by the fulness of thy riches and power.

Nor hast thou any necessity to flatter thy creatures, or to say kinder things to them than thou meanest to fulfil. Miserable man can bring no advantage to thee, nor has he any thing to claim from thee. By what benefit has he prevented thee? By what right can he demand the least of thy favors? Thy engagements are all free and unconstrained, founded on thy own beneficence, and not on the merits of thy creature.— While I consider this, my expectations rise: I set no limits to my hopes: I look up with confidence, and call thee *my Father*, and, with an humble faith, I claim every advantage that tender name imports. My heart confides in thee with steadfastness and alacrity: fear and distrust are inconsistent

with my thoughts of the beneficence of thy nature.

Every name and attribute by which thou hast revealed thyself to man, confirms my faith. Thy life, thy being, is engaged: I may as well question thy existence as thy faithfulness—as sure as thou art, thou art just and true. The protestations of the most faithful friend I have, cannot give me half the consolation that thy promises give me. I hear vain man with diffidence. I bid my soul beware of trusting false mortality; but I hear thy voice with joy and full assurance.

Thy words are not writ on sand, nor scattered by the fleeting winds, but shall stand in force when heaven and earth shall be no more. Eternal ages shall not diminish their efficacy, nor alter what the mouth of the Lord hath spoken. I believe, I believe with the most perfect assent: I know that “thou art, and that thou art a rewarder of them that diligently seek thee:” I feel the evidence, for thou hast not left thyself without a witness in my heart.

III. LONGING AFTER THE ENJOYMENT OF GOD.

MY God, to thee my sighs ascend: every complaint I make ends with thy name: I pause, I dwell on the sound: I speak it over again, and find that all my cares begin and end in thee. I long to behold the supreme beauty. I pant for the fair original of all that is lovely; for beauty that is yet unknown, and for intellectual pleasures yet untasted.

My heart aspires, my wishes fly beyond the bounds of creation, and despise all that mortality can present me with. I was formed for celestial joys, and find myself capable of the entertainment of angels.—Why may I not begin my heaven below, and taste at least of the springs of pleasure that flow from thy right hand for ever?

Should I drink my fill, those fountains are still exhaustless: millions of happy souls quench their infinite desires there: millions of happy orders of beings gaze on thy beauty, and are made partakers of thy blessedness; but thou art still undiminished: no liberality can waste the store of thy perfection; it has

flowed from eternity, and runs for ever fresh ;
and why must I perish for want ?

My thirsty soul pines for the waters of life :
O ! who will refresh me with the pleasurable
draught ! How long shall I wander in this
desert land, where every prospect is waste
and barren ? I look round me in vain, and,
sigh still unsatisfied. O ! who will lead me
to the still waters, and make me repose in
green pastures, where the weary are for ever
at rest ? How tedious are the hours of ex-
pectation !

Come, Lord, my head doth burn, my heart is sick,
While thou dost ever, ever stay :
Thy long deferring wounds me to the quick,
My spirit gaspeth night and day :
O show thyself to me,
Or take me up to thee.

Despatch thy commission : give me my
work, and activity to perform it ; and let me
as a hireling fulfil my day. Lord, it is enough :
What am I better than my fathers ? they are
dead, and I am mortal.

I'm but a stranger and pilgrim here
In these wild regions, wandering and forlorn,
Restless and sighing for my native home,
Longing to reach my weary space of life,

And to fulfil my task. O haste the hour
Of joy and sweet repose! Transporting hope!

Lord, here I am waiting for thy commands,
attending thy pleasure: O speak, and incline
my ear to hear: give me my work, let me finish
it, and gain my dismissal from this body.

I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!
when wilt thou let me into thy holy habita-
tion? How long shall I pine at this distance
from thee? What can I speak to show thee
my pain, to utter my anguish, when I fear
the loss of my God! O speak an assuring
word, and confirm my hope!

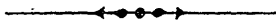
Transporting moment! when wilt thou appear
To crown my hopes, and banish all my fear?

Again, O my Father, and my eternal
Friend, I breathe out my requests to thee in
this land of fatigue and folly! What is this
life but a sorry, tiresome round, a circle of
repeated vanities! Happiness has been never
seen in it since sin and folly entered: all is
empty appearance, or vain labor, or painful
vexation.

Sufficed with life, my languid spirits faint,
And fain would be at rest. O let me enter
Those sacred seats; and, after all the toil
Of life, begin an everlasting Sabbath!

Yet again, O Lord, I ask leave to tell thee, *I have waited for thy salvation*, and hourly languished after the habitations of my God. My heart grows sick, and I almost expire under these delays. What have I here to keep me from thee? what to relieve the tedious hours of absence? I have pronounced all below the sun vanity and vexation—all insipid and burdensome. Amidst health and plenty, friends and reputation, thou art my only joy, my highest wish, and my supreme delight. On thee my soul fixes all her hopes; there I rest in a celestial calm. O let it not be broken with earthly objects: let me live unmolested with the cares or delights of sense!

O let me flee
From all the world, and live alone to Thee.



IV. GOD MY SUPREME, MY ONLY HOPE.

WHY do I address thee, my God, with no more confidence? Why do I indulge these remains of unbelief, and harbor these returns of infidelity and distrust? Can I survey the earth, can I gaze on the structure of the

heavens, and ask if thou art able to deliver? Can I call in question thy ability to succor me, when I consider the general and particular instances of thy goodness and power? One age to another, in long succession, hath conveyed the records of thy glory. "In all generations thou hast been our dwelling-place: my fathers trusted in thee, and were delivered." They have encouraged me—my own experience hath encouraged me, to trust in thee for ever.

The sun may fail to rise, and man in vain expect its light; but thy truth, thy faithfulness cannot fail: the course of nature may be reversed, and all be chaos again; but thou art immutable, and canst not by any change deceive the hopes of them that trust in thee. I adore thy power, and subscribe to thy goodness and fidelity, and what further objection would my unbelief raise? Is any thing too hard for God to accomplish? Can the united force of earth and hell resist his will?

Great God! how wide thy glories shine!

How broad thy kingdom! how divine!

Nature, and miracle, and fate, and chance are thine.

Therefore I apply myself immediately to thee, and renounce all the terror and all the

confidence that may rise from heaven or earth besides.

Not from the dust my joys or sorrows spring:
Let all the baleful planets shed
Their mingled curses round my head,
 Their mingled curses I despise,
Let but the great, th' eternal King
Look through the clouds, and bless me with his eyes.

Let him bless me, and I shall be blessed ;
blessed without reserve or limitation ; blessed
in my going out and coming in, my sitting
down and rising up ; blessed in time, and
blessed to all eternity. That blessing from
thy lips will influence the whole creation, and
attend me wherever I am. It shall go before
me as a leading light, and follow me as my
protecting angel. When I lie down, it will
cover me. I shall rest beneath the shadow
of the Most High, and dwell safely in the
secrets of his tabernacle.

“Thy kingdom ruleth over all, O Lord,
and thou dost according to thy will in the
armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants
of the earth.” I confess and acknowledge
thy providence. The ways of man are not at
his own disposal, but all his goings are or-
dered by thee : all events are in thy hands,

and thou only canst succeed or disappoint his hopes. If thou blow on his designs, they are for ever blasted ; if thou bless them, neither earth nor hell can hinder their success ; therefore I apply myself immediately to thee, for not all created power can assist me without thee.

Hence from my heart ye idols flee,
Ye sounding names of vanity !
No more my tongue shall sacrifice
To chance and nature, tales and lies :
Creatures without a God, can yield me no supplies.

Not all the power of man on earth, nor angel nor saint in heaven, can help or relieve me in the least exigence, if my God hide himself, and stand afar off from me. Second causes are all at thy direction, and cannot aid me till commissioned by thee.

Lord, when my thoughtful soul surveys
Fire, air, and earth, and stars, and seas,
I call them all thy slaves :
Commission'd by my Father's will,
Poison shall cure, or balm shall kill :
Vernal suns, or zephyr's breath,
May burn or blast the plants to death,
That sharp December saves.
What can winds or planets boast,
But a precarious power ?
D

The sun is all in darkness lost,
Frost shall be fire, and fire be frost,
When he appoints the hour.

At thy command, nature and necessity are no more: all things are alike easy to God. Speak but thou the word, and my desires are granted: say, Let there be light, and there shall be light. Thou canst look me into peace, when the tumult of thoughts raises a storm within. Bid my soul be still, and all its tempests shall obey thee.

I depend only on thee: do thou smile, and all the world may frown: do thou succeed my affairs, and I shall fear no obstacle that earth or hell can put in my way. Thou only art the object of my fear, and all my desires are directed to thee.

Human things have lost their beings and their names, and vanish into nothing before thee: they are but shades and disguises to veil the active divinity. O let me break through all these separations, and see and confess the great, the governing cause. Let no appearance of created things, however specious, hide thee from my view: let me look through all to thee, nor cast a glance of love or hope below thee. With a holy con-

tempt, let me survey the ample round of the creation, as lying in the hollow of thy hand, and every being in heaven or on earth as immovable by the most potent cause in nature, till commissioned by thee to do good or hurt. O let thy hand be with me to keep me from evil, and let me abide under the shadow of the Almighty! I shall be secure in thy pavilion. To thee I fly for shelter from all the ills of mortality.



V. GOD A PRESENT HELP, AND EVER NEAR.

THOU wast found of me, O my God, when I sought thee not, and wilt thou fly me when I seek thee? Am I giving my breath to the wind, and scattering my petitions in the air! Is it a vain thing to call upon God, and is there no profit in crying to the Almighty? "Art thou a God afar off, and not near at hand?" Is there any place exempt from thy presence; any distance whence my cries cannot reach thee? Can any darkness hide me from thine eyes? or is there a corner of the creation unvisited by thee? Dost thou

not fill heaven and earth, and am I not surrounded by thy immensity?

Are my desires unknown to thee? or is there a thought in my heart concealed from thee? Dost not thou that hast formed the ear, hear? Canst thou forget the work of thine own hands? or, retired far in the heavens, full of thine own happiness, canst thou leave thy creation to misery and disorder, helpless and hopeless, and the ways of man at his own disposal, and his path undirected by thee? Is calling on the living God no more than worshipping a dumb idol? Canst thou, like them, disappoint and mock thy adorers?

Art thou unacquainted with the extent of thy own power, that thou shouldst promise beyond thy ability to perform? or art thou "as a man, that thou shouldst lie, or the son of man, that thou shouldst repent?" Is thy faithfulness uncertain, and thy power precarious? Are those perfections imaginary for which men adore thee, and thy gracious names insignificant titles? Do the children of men in vain put their trust under the shadow of thy wings? Art not thou a present help in the time of trouble? And is

there no security in the secret places of the Most High? Whither then shall I look in my distress? to whom shall I direct my prayer? from whom shall I expect relief, if there is no help in God for me?

But, O! what unrighteousness have my fathers ever found in thee? what injustice can I charge thee with? what breach of truth, or want of pity? Have the records of thy actions ever been stained with the breach of faithfulness? Art thou not my only hope, and my long experienced support? Have I ever found help from thy creatures when thou hast failed me? Have I, or can I have, a greater certainty than thy word to depend on? Can any other power defend or deliver like thee? Thou art "a rock, and thy work is perfect; for all thy ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right art thou." With my last breath I will witness to thy truth and faithfulness, and declare thy goodness to the children of men.

VI. GOD AN ALL-SUFFICIENT GOOD, AND MY ONLY HAPPINESS.

WHY is my heart so far from thee,
My God, my chief delight!
Why are my thoughts no more by day
With thee, no more by night?

Why should my foolish passions rove?
Where can such sweetness be.
As I have tasted in thy love,
As I have found in thee?

Where can I hope to meet such joys as thy smiles have given me? where can I find pleasure so sincere and unalloyed? When I have enjoyed the light of thy countenance, and the sense of thy love, has not all my soul been filled? Have I found any want or emptiness? has there been any room left for desire, or any prospect beyond, beside the more perfect enjoyment of my God? Have not all the glories of the world been darkened, and turned into blackness and deformity? How poor, how contemptible have they appeared! or rather, have they not all appeared and vanished as dreams and shadows in the noon of day, and under the blaze of sunbeams?

I have never found satisfaction in any thing but in God: why then do I wander from him? why do I leave the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns? why do I abandon the full ocean in search of shallow streams? What account can I give for folly like this? I can promise myself nothing from the creature: those expectations shall deceive me no more. 'Tis thou, my God, thou art the only object of my hopes and desires: it is thou only canst make me happy.

If thou frown, my being is a curse: thy indignation is hell with all its terrors. Let me never feel that, and I defy all things else to make me miserable. I seem independent on all nature: to thee I only apply myself. Hear me, thou beneficent Author of my being, thou support of my life: to thee I direct my wishes, those desires which thou wilt approve, while I ask but the happiness I was created to enjoy. O! fix all my expectations on thee, and free me from this levity and inconstancy.

Look gently down, almighty Grace,
Prison me round in thy embrace:
Pity the heart that would be thine,
And let thy power my love confine.

Suffer me never to start from thee: such a confinement were sweeter than liberty:—"Thy yoke is easy, and thy burden light." I shall bless the chain that binds me to thee. O! give me such a view of thy beauty as shall fix my volatile heart for ever: such a view as shall determine all its motions, and be a constant conviction how unreasonable it is to wander from thee.

Is it that I relish any thing beyond thy love? O! no. I appeal even to thee, who canst not be deceived, and knowest the inmost secrets of my soul. Thou knowest where the balance of my love falls, and that my wanderings are not deliberate—that it is not by choice that I forsake thee. I grieve, I sigh for my folly: shouldst thou forgive me, I can never forgive myself, for I know it is inexcusable.

I want nothing when I am possessed of thee: without thee I want all things. Thou art the centre of all my passions: I have no hope but what is thine, no joy but what flows from thee: my greatest fears are those of losing thee: my inmost care is to secure thy favor. This is the subject of my deepest anxiety: every sigh I breathe ends in thy

name, and that loved name alone allays every anguish of my soul, and calms its wildest tempests.

From thy frowns or favor all my joys or sorrows spring: thy frown can make me infinitely miserable, thy favor can make me infinitely blessed. I can defy hell, and smile in the face of death, whilst I can call thee *mine*. My God! still let me bless the sound, and part with all things rather than renounce my property in thee: let me hold it to my last breath, and claim it with my expiring sighs.

Secure of thee, nothing can terrify my soul: all is peaceful and serene within, eternal love and immortal pleasure: I desire no more: imagination stops here, and all my wishes are lost in eternal plenty. My God! More cannot be asked, and with less I should be infinitely miserable. The kingdoms of the skies should not buy my title to thee and thy love: the blessedness of all creatures is complete here, for God himself is blessed in himself for ever.

What can I add? for all my words are faint:
Celestial love no eloquence can paint:
No more can be in mortal sounds exprest,
But vast eternity shall tell the rest.

VII. A COVENANT WITH GOD.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE Being, who "searchest the heart and triest the reins of the children of men," thou knowest my sincerity, and my thoughts are all unveiled to thee: I am surrounded with thine immensity: thou art a present though invisible witness of the solemn affair I am now engaged in. I am now taking hold of thy strength, that I may make peace with thee, and entering into articles with the almighty God. These are the happy days long since predicted, when one shall say, "I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Israel, and another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord; and I will be their God, and they shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord JEHOVAH."

With the most thankful sincerity I take hold of this covenant, as it is more fully manifested and explained in the gospel of JESUS CHRIST, and humbly accepting thy proposals, I bind myself to thee by a sacred and everlasting obligation. By a free and deliberate

action, I do here ratify the articles which were made for me in my baptism, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: I religiously devote myself to thy service, and entirely submit to thy conduct. I renounce the glories and vanities of the world, and choose thee as my happiness, my supreme felicity, and everlasting portion. I make no articles with thee for any thing besides: deny or give me what thou wilt, I will never repine, while my principal treasure is secure. This is my deliberate, my free and sincere determination—a determination which, by thy grace, I will never retract.

O thou! by whose power alone I shall be able to stand, put thy fear in my heart, that I may never depart from thee. Let not the world, with all its flatteries, nor death, nor hell, with all their terrors, force me to violate this sacred vow. O! let me never live to abandon thee, nor draw the impious breath that would deny thee.

And now let surrounding angels witness for me, that I solemnly devote all the powers and faculties of my soul to thy service; and when I presumptuously employ any of the advantages thou hast given me to thy dis-

honor, let them testify against me, and let my own words condemn me.

ELIZABETH ROWE.

Thus have I subscribed to thy gracious proposals, and engaged myself to be the Lord's; and now let the malice of men and the rage of devils combine against me, I can defy all their stratagems; for God himself has become my Friend. JESUS is my all-sufficient Saviour, and the SPIRIT of GOD, I trust, will be my sanctifier and comforter.

O happy day! transporting moment! the brightest period of my life! Heaven, with all its light, smiles on me. What glorious mortal can now excite my envy? what scene to tempt my ambition could the whole creation display? Let glory call me, with her exalted voice: let pleasure, with a softer eloquence, allure me: the world, in all its splendor, appears but a trifle, while the infinite God is my portion. He is mine, by as sure a title as eternal veracity can confer.

VIII. EVIDENCE OF SINCERE LOVE TO GOD.

IF I love thee not, my blessed God, I know not what I love: if I am uncertain of this, I am uncertain of my existence. If I love thee not, what is the meaning of these pathetic expressions: My God, My ALL! thou spring of my life, and fountain of my happiness! my great reward and my exceeding joy! the eternal object of my love, and supreme felicity of my nature? Does not my heart attend my lips in all this language? How can this be, if my soul does not love thee? O my God, if I love thee not, what is the meaning of this constant uneasiness at thy absence? from whence proceeds this painful anxiety of mind about thy love, and all these intense, these restless desires after thee? why are all the satisfactions of life insipid without thee? Without my God, what are riches, and honors, and pleasures to me? I should esteem the possession of the world but a trifle, or rather, my eternal damage, if it must be purchased with the loss of thy favor. Thy benignity is better than life, and the moments in which I enjoy a sense of thy love, are the only happy

intervals of my life. 'Tis then I live: it is then I am truly blessed: it is then I look down with contempt on the little amusements of the world, and pity them that want a taste for these exalted pleasures.

How calm, how peaceful, in those seasons, are all the regions of my soul! I have enough, I ask no more. Can they languish for the stream who drink at the overflowing fountain? I have all the world, and more! I have heaven itself in thee: in thee I am completely and securely blessed, and can defy the malice of earth and hell to shake the foundation of my happiness, while thou dost whisper thy love to my soul. O blessed stability of heart! O sublime satisfaction!

Hast thou not terminated my wishes, O Lord, in thyself, and fixed my wandering desires? Is it for riches or honors, for length of days, or pleasure, that I follow thee with daily importunities? Thou knowest these are not the subjects of my restless petitions: do I ever balance these toys with thy favor? O! no: one smile of thine obscures all their glory. When thou dost bless my retired devotions with thy presence, I can wink all created beauty into blackness. When I meet

thee in my solitary contemplations, with what contempt do I look back on the lessening world!

How dazzling is thy beauty! how divine!
How dim the lustre of the world to thine!

How dull are its entertainments to the pleasures of conversing with thee! O! stay in those happy moments, cries my satisfied soul:

Stay, my beloved, with me here:
Stay till the morning star appear,
Stay till the dusky shadows fly
Before the day's illustrious eye.

O! stay till the gloomy night of life is past, and eternity dawns on my soul. There is nothing in this barren place to entertain me when thou art gone: I can relish nothing below, after these celestial banquets.

If I love thee not, what is the meaning of this impatience to be with thee? "My soul longeth, yea, fainteth for the courts of the Lord! when shall I come and appear before thee? O that I had the wings of a dove; for then would I fly away and be at rest."

IX. THOU ART MY GOD.

O God, thou art my God: thou art thy own blessedness, the centre of thy own desires, and the boundless spring of thy own happiness. Thou art immutable and infinitely perfect, and therein consist thy blessedness and glory; but that thou art my God, it is from thence flows all my consolation: this glorious privilege is my dignity and boast—"Thou art my God, and I will praise thee; my father's God, and I will exalt thee. The Lord liveth, and blessed be my rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted. Thy benignity is better than life; therefore my lips shall praise thee."

I have all things in possessing thee: I find no want, no emptiness within: my wishes are answered, and all my desires appeased, when I believe my title to thy favor secure. Whatever tempests arise, whatever darkness surround me, yet thou art my God: I cry, and the storms are appeased, and the darkness vanishes: I find my expectations from the world disappointed, my friends false, and human dependence vain! but still thou art

my God, my unfailing confidence, my rock, my everlasting inheritance. Death and hell level their darts against me; but with a heavenly tranquillity I cry, "Thou art my God:" I dwell on high, my place of defence is in the munition of rocks.

My hiding place, my refuge tower,
And shield art thou, O Lord:
I firmly anchor all my hopes
On thy unerring word.

While thou art mine, what can I fear?
Can omnipotence be vanquished: can almighty strength be opposed? When it can, then, and not till then, shall I want security; then, and not till then, shall my confidence be shaken, and my hopes confounded.

Thou art my God. Let me again repeat the glorious accents, and hear the pleasurable sounds: let me a thousand and a thousand times repeat it: it is rapture all, and harmony: the harps of angels and their tongues, what notes more melodious could they sing or play? What but these transporting words give the emphasis to all their joys? On this they dwell, it is their eternal theme, Thou art my God. Like me, every seraph boasts the glorious property, and

owes his happiness to those important words: in them unbounded joys are comprehended. Paradise itself, all heaven is here described: all that is possible to be uttered of celestial blessedness is here contained.

My God, my all-sufficient good,
My portion, and my choice:
In thee my vast desires are fill'd,
And all my powers rejoice.

My God, my triumph, and my glory! Let others boast of what they will, and pride themselves in human securities: let them place their confidence in their wealth, their honor, and their numerous friends; I renounce all earthly dependence, and glory only in my God.

From him alone my joys shall rise,
And run eternal rounds,
Beyond the limits of the skies,
And all created bounds.

When death shall remove all other supports, and force me to quit my title to the dearest names below, in *my God* I shall have an unchangeable property: that engagement shall remain firm, when I shall lose my hold of all other enjoyments: when all human things

vanish with an everlasting flight, I shall bid them a joyful adieu, and breathe out my soul with this triumphant exclamation, *Thou art my God*, my inheritance, my eternal possession: nor death, nor hell, shall ever separate me from thy love.

Thou art my God. Let me survey the extent of my blessedness: let me take a prospect of my vast possession: let me consider its dimensions. O height! O depth! O length and breadth immeasurable! I have all that is worth possessing: *Thou art my God.*

But what have I uttered! Is mortality permitted to speak these daring words? can the race of man make such glorious pretensions? Thou thyself canst give no more: thou that art thy own happiness, and the spring of joy to all thy creatures: with thee are the fountains of pleasure, and in thy presence is fulness of joy: immortal life and happiness flow from thee, and they are necessarily blessed who are surrounded with thy favor: thou art their God, and *thou art my God*, to everlasting ages.

Earth flies, with all the charms it has in store:
Its snares and gay temptations are no more:

Creatures no more of entity can boast,
The streams, the hills, and towering groves are lost.
The sun, the stars, and the fair fields of light,
Withdraw, and now are banish'd from my sight,
And God is all in all.



X. CONFESSION OF SIN WITH HOPE OF PARDON.

BREAK, break, insensible heart: let confusion cover me, and darkness, black as my own guilt, surround me. Lord, what a monster am I become! How hateful to myself for offending thee! how much more detestable to thee, against whom I have offended! Why have I provoked the God on whom my being every moment depends—the God who out of nothing advanced me to a reasonable and immortal nature, and put me in a capacity of being happy for ever—the God whose goodness has run parallel with my life; who has preserved me in a thousand dangers, and kept me even from the ruin I courted, and even while I repined at the providence that saved me!

How often has he recovered me from eternal misery, and brought me back from the very borders of hell, when there was but a

dying groan, but one faint sigh, between me and everlasting perdition? When all human help failed, and my mourning friends were taking their last farewell—when every smiling hope forsook me, and the horrors of death surrounded me, to God I cried from the depths of misery and despair—I cried, and he was entreated, and rescued my life from destruction: he “brought me out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock.” A thousand instances of thy goodness could I recount, and all to my own confusion.

Could I consider thee as my enemy, I might forgive myself; but when I consider thee as my best friend, my tender father, the sustainer of my life and author of my happiness, good God! what a monstrous thing do I appear, who have sinned against thee! Could I charge thee with severity, or call thy laws rigorous and unjust, I had some excuse; but I am silenced there by the conviction of my own reason, which assents to all thy precepts as just and holy. But, to heighten my guilt, I have violated the sacred rules I approve: I have provoked the justice I fear, and offended the purity I adore. Yet still there are higher aggravations of my iniquity;

and what gives me the utmost confusion, is, that I have sinned against unbounded love and goodness. Horrid ingratitude: here lies the emphasis of my folly and misery: the sense of this torments me, can I not say, as much as the dread of hell, or the fears of losing heaven! Thy love and tender compassion, the late pleasing subjects of my thoughts, are on this account become my terror. The titles of an enemy and a judge scarce sound more painful to my ears, than those of a friend and a benefactor, which so shamefully enhance my guilt: those sacred names confound and terrify my soul, because they furnish my conscience with the most exquisite reproaches. The thoughts of such goodness abused, and such clemency affronted, seem to me almost as insupportable as those of thy wrath and severity. O! whither shall I turn? I dare not look upward—the sun and stars upbraid me there: if I look downward, the fields and fountains take their Creator's part, and heaven and earth conspire to aggravate my sins. Those common blessings tell me how much I am indebted to thy bounty; but, Lord, when I recall thy particular favors, I am utterly confounded.

What numerous instances could I recount! Nor has my rebellion yet shut up the fountain of thy grace; for yet I breathe, and yet I live, and live to implore a pardon: heaven is still open, and the throne of God accessible. But O! with what confidence can I approach it? what motives can I urge, but such as carry my own condemnation in them?

Shall I urge thy former pity and indulgence? This were to plead against myself; and yet thy clemency, that clemency which I have abused, is the best argument I can bring: thy grace and clemency, as revealed in J sus, the Son of thy love, the blessed Reconciler of God and man.

O whither has my folly reduced me? with what words shall I choose to address thee? "Pardon mine iniquity, O Lord! for it is great." Surprising argument! yet this will magnify thy goodness, and yield me an eternal theme to praise thee: it will add an emphasis to all my grateful songs, and tune my harp to everlasting harmony. The ransomed of the Lord shall join with me, while this glorious instance of thy grace excites their wonder and my unbounded gratitude: thus shall thy glory be exalted.

O Lord God, permit a poor worthless creature to plead a little with thee. What honor will my destruction bring thee? what profit, what triumph to the Almighty will my perdition be? Mercy is thy brightest attribute: this gives thee all thy loveliness, and completes thy beauty. By names of kindness and indulgence thou hast chosen to reveal thyself to men: by titles of the most tender import thou hast made thyself known to my soul: titles which thou dost not yet disdain, but art still compassionate, and ready to pardon.

But that thou hast or wilt forgive me, O my God! aggravates my guilt. And wilt thou indeed forgive me? wilt thou remit the gloomy score, and restore the privilege I have forfeited? Wondrous love! astonishing benignity! let me never live to repeat my ingratitude: let me never live to break my penitent vows: let me die ere that unhappy moment arrives.

XI. THE ABSENCE OF GOD ON EARTH.

WHAT is hell, what is damnation, but an exclusion from thy presence? 'Tis the want of that which gives the regions of darkness all their horror. What is heaven, what is the satisfaction of angels, but the views of thy glory! what but thy smiles and complacence are the spring of their immortal transports!

Without the light of thy countenance, what privilege is my being? what canst thou thyself give me to countervail the infinite loss? Could the riches, the empty glories, and insipid pleasures of the world, recompense me for it? Ah! no: not all the variety of the creation could satisfy me, while I am deprived of thee. Let the ambitious, the licentious, and covetous, share these trifles among themselves: they are no amusement for my dejected thoughts.

There was a time, (but ah! that happy time is past, those blissful minutes gone,) when, with a modest assurance, I could call thee "my Father, my almighty friend, my defence, my hope, and my exceeding great

reward ;” but those glorious advantages are lost, those ravishing prospects withdrawn, and to my trembling soul thou dost no more appear, but as a consuming fire, an inaccessible majesty, my severe judge, and my omnipotent adversary ; and who shall deliver me out of thy hands ? Where shall I find a shelter from thy wrath ? what shades can cover me from thy all-seeing eye ?

One glance from thee, one piercing ray,
Would kindle darkness into day ;
The veil of night is no disguise,
No screen from thy all-searching eyes :
Through midnight shades thou find'st thy way,
As in the blazing noon of day.

“ But will the Lord cast off for ever ?— Will he be favorable no more ? Has God indeed forgotten to be gracious !” Will he shut out my prayer for ever, and must I never behold my Maker ? Must I never meet those smiles that fill the heavenly inhabitants with unutterable joys—those smiles which enlighten the celestial region, and make everlasting day above ? In vain, then, have these wretched eyes beheld the light : in vain am I endued with reasonable faculties and immortal principles : alas ! what will they prove

but everlasting curses, if I must never see the face of God?

Is it a dream? or do I hear
The voice that so delights my ear?
Lo, he o'er hills his steps extends,
And bounding from the cliffs descends:
Now like a roe outstrips the wind,
And leaves the panting hart behind.

“I have waited for thee as they that wait for the morning,” and thy returns are more welcome than the spring day light after the horrors of a melancholy night—more welcome than ease to the sick, than water to the thirsty, or rest to the weary traveller. How undone was I without thee! In vain, while thou wert absent, the world hath tried to entertain me: all it could offer was like jests to a dying man, or like recreations to the damned. On thy favor alone my tranquillity depends: deprived of that, I should sigh for happiness in the midst of a paradise: “thy loving kindness is better than life.” And if a taste of thy love be thus transporting, what ecstasies shall I know when I drink my fill of the streams of bliss that flow from thy right hand for ever! But when—

When shall this happy day of vision be?
When shall I make a near approach to thee—
Be lost in love, and wrapt in ecstasy?

O! when shall I behold thee all serene,
 Without this envious cloudy veil between?
 'Tis true, the sacred elements* impart
 Thy virtual presence to my faithful heart,
 But to my sense still unreveal'd thou art.
 This, though a great, is an imperfect bliss,
 To see a shadow for the God I wish:
 My soul a more exalted pitch would fly,
 And view thee in the heights of majesty.



XII. BANISHMENT FROM GOD FOR EVER.

“DEPART from me, ye cursed!” O! let me never hear thy voice pronounce those dreadful words. With what terror would that sentence pierce my heart, while it thundered in my ears! O! rather speak me into my primitive nothing, and with one potent word finish my existence. To be separated from thee, and cursed with immortality—who can sustain the intolerable doom!

O dreadful state of black despair,
 To see my God remove,
 And fix my doleful station where
 I must not taste his love,

* The Lord's Supper.

nor view the light of thy countenance for ever. Unutterable woe! there is no hell beyond it. Separation from God is the depth of misery. Blackness of darkness, and eternal night, must necessarily involve a soul excluded from thy presence. What life, what joy, what hope is to be found where thou art not? I want words to paint my thoughts of that dismal state. O! let me never be reserved for the dreadful experience! rather let loose thy wrath, and in a moment reduce me into nothing.

“Depart from thee!” O! whither should I go from thee? “Into utter darkness!” That makes no addition at all to the wretch’s misery that is banished from thy face. After that fearful doom, I should, without constraint, seek out shades as dark as hell, being most agreeable to my own despair, and in the horrors of eternal night bewail the infinite loss.

The remembrance of that lost happiness would render celestial day insufferable. The light of paradise could not cheer me without thy favor: the song of angels would but heighten my anguish, and torment me with a scene of bliss which I must never taste. The

sight of thy favorites, and the glories of thy court, would but excite my envy, and fill me with madness, while I considered myself the object of thine eternal indignation; nor could all the harmony of heaven allay the horror of that reflection.

The groans of the damned, and the darkness of the infernal caverns, would better suit my grief. There, to the cries of tormented ghosts, and to the sound of eternal tempest, I might join my wild complaints, and lament the loss of infinite bliss, and curse my own folly. But all the plagues below, if I might speak my present thoughts, should not extort a blasphemous reflection on the Divine attributes; for I know I deserve eternal misery, and even in hell I think I should confess thy justice. Thy long experienced clemency, I am sure, ought to silence my reproaches for ever, and to all eternity leave thee unblemished with the imputation of cruelty.

But O! what agonies would the remembrance of thy former favor excite! what exquisite remorse would it give me to recall those happy moments, when thou didst bless my retired devotions with thy presence! After I have relished those divine entertain-

ments, how bitter would the dregs of thy wrath be! Whither would thy frowns sink me, after I have enjoyed the light of thy countenance?

If I must lose thy favor, O! let me forget what that word imports, and blot for ever from my remembrance the joys that a sense of thy love has excited; let no traces of those sacred transports be left on my soul.

But must I depart from thee into everlasting fire? Double and dreadful curse! and yet unquenchable flames, and infernal chains, (if I can judge in this life of such awful futurities,) would be less terrible than the sense of those lost joys. That loss would endure no reflection: the review would be for ever insufferable: the ages of eternity could not diminish the exquisite regret: still it would excite new and unutterable anguish, and rack me with infinite despair.

Blessed God! pity the soul whose extremest horror is the doom of an eternal departure from thee. Draw my spirit into the holiest and the nearest union with thyself that is possible, while it dwells in the flesh, and let me here commence that delightful residence and converse with God, which neither death

nor judgment shall ever destroy, nor shall a long eternity ever put a period to.



XIII. THE GLORY OF GOD IN HIS WORKS OF CREATION, PROVIDENCE, AND REDEMPTION.

My being immediately flows from thee, and should I not praise my omnipotent Maker? I received the last breath I drew from thee: thou dost sustain my life this very moment, and the next depends entirely on thy pleasure. 'Tis the dignity of my nature to know, and my happiness to praise and adore, my great Original. But O! thou supreme of all things, how art thou to be extolled by mortal man! "I said to corruption, Thou art my father, and to the worms, Ye are my brethren. My days are as a hand's-breadth, and my life is nothing before thee; but thou art the same, and thy years never fail. From everlasting to everlasting thou art God"—the incomprehensible, the immutable Divinity. The language of paradise, and the strains of celestial eloquence, fall short of thy perfections: the first-born sons of light lose themselves in blissful astonishment in search

of thy excellencies: even they, with silent ecstasy, adore thee, while thou art veiled with ineffable splendor.

The bright, the bless'd Divinity is known
And comprehended by himself alone.

Who can conceive the extent of that power, which out of nothing brought materials for a rising world; and from a gloomy chaos bid the harmonious universe appear!

Confusion heard the voice, and wild uproar
Stood ruled—stood vast infinity confined.

At thy word the pillars of the sky were framed, and its beauteous arches raised: thy breath kindled the stars, adorned the moon with silver rays, and gave the sun its flaming splendor. Thou didst prepare for the waters their capacious bed, and by thy power set bounds to the raging billows: by thee the valleys were clothed in their flowery pride, and the mountains crowned with groves. In all the wonderful effects of nature we adore and confess thy power: thou utterest thy voice in thunder, and dost scatter thy lightning abroad: thou ridest on the wings of the wind—the mountains smoke, and the forests

tremble at thy approach: the summer and winter, the shady night, and the bright revolutions of the day, are thine.

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good!
Almighty, thine this universal frame:
Thus wondrous they: thyself how wondrous then!

But O, what must thy essential majesty and beauty be, if thou art thus illustrious in thy works? If the discoveries of thy power and wisdom are thus delightful, how transporting are the manifestations of thy goodness! From thee every thing that lives receives its breath, and by thee are all upheld in life. Thy providence reaches the least insect; for thou art good, and thy care extends to all thy works. Thou feedest the ravens, and dost provide the young lions their prey: thou scatterest thy blessings with a liberal hand on thy whole creation: man, ungrateful man, largely partakes of thy bounty. Thou causest thy rain to descend, and makest thy sun to shine on the evil and unthankful; for thou art good, and thy mercy endureth for ever.

As the Creator and Preserver of men, thou art gloriously manifest; but O! how much

more gloriously art thou revealed, as reconciling ungrateful enemies to thyself by the blood of thy eternal Son! Here thy beneficence displays its brightest splendor: here thou dost fully discover thy most magnificent titles, *The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness.* "How unsearchable are thy ways, and thy paths past finding out!" Infinite depths of love, never to be expressed by human language! And yet, should man be silent, the stones themselves would speak, and the mute creation find a voice to upbraid his ungrateful folly.



XIV. LONGING FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST.

COME, Lord Jesus, come quickly: O! come, lest my expectations faint, lest I grow weary, and murmur at thy long delay. I am tired with these vanities, and the world grows every day more unentertaining and insipid: it has now lost its charms, and finds my heart insensible to all its allurements. With coldness and contempt I view these transitory glories; inspired with nobler prospects, and

vaster expectations, by faith I see the promised land, and every day brings me nearer the possession of my heavenly inheritance. Then shall I see God and live, and face to face behold my triumphant Redeemer :

And in his favor find immortal light:
Ye hours and days, cut short your tedious flight :
Ye months and years, (if such allotted be
In this detested barren world for me,)
With hasty revolution roll along :
I languish with impatience to be gone.

I have nothing here to linger for: my hopes, my rest, my treasure, and my joys, are all above: my soul faints for the courts of the Lord in a dry and thirsty land, where there is no refreshment.

How long "shall I dwell in Meshech, and sojourn in the tents of Kedar?" When will the wearisome journey of life be finished? when shall I reach my everlasting home, and arrive at my celestial country? My heart, my wishes are already there! I have no engagements to delay my farewell, nothing to detain me here; but wander an unacquainted pilgrim, a stranger and desolate, far from my native regions.

My friends are gone before, and are now

triumphing in the skies, secure of the conquest, possessed of the rewards of victory They survey the field of battle, and look back with pleasure on the distant danger: death and hell, for ever vanquished, leave them in the possession of endless tranquillity and joy; while I, beset with a thousand snares, and tired with continual toil, unsteadily maintain the field, till active faith steps in, assures me of the conquest, and shows me the immortal crown. 'Tis faith tells me that "light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." It assures me "that my Redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the last day on the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and not another; and these eyes shall behold, though my reins be consumed within me. Amen: even so, come, Lord Jesus." This must be the language of my soul till thou dost appear, and these my impatient breathings after thee. Till I see thy salvation, my heart and my flesh will pine for the living God.

"Grant me, O Lord, to fulfil as a hireling my day:" shorten the space, and let it be

full of action. 'Tis of small importance how few there are of these little circles of days and hours, so they are but well filled up with devotion and with all proper duty.



XV. SEEKING AFTER AN ABSENT GOD.

O! LET not the Lord be angry, and I, who am but dust, will speak. Why dost thou withdraw thyself, and suffer me to pursue thee in vain? If I am surrounded with thy immensity, why am I thus insensible of thee? why do I not find thee, if thou art everywhere present! I seek thee in the temple, where thou hast often met me: there I have seen the traces of thy majesty and beauty; but those sacred visions bless my sight no more. I seek thee in my secret retirements, where I have called upon thy name, and have often heard the whispers of thy voice: that celestial conversation hath often reached and raptured my soul; but I am solaced no more with thy divine condescensions. I listen, but I hear those gentle sounds no more: I pine and languish, but thou fleest

me: still I wither in thy absence, as a drooping plant for the reviving sun.

O when wilt thou scatter this melancholy darkness? when shall the shadows flee before thee? when shall the cheerful glory of thy grace dawn upon my mind at thy approach? I shall revive at thy light: my vital spirits will confess thy presence: grief and anxiety will vanish before thee, and immortal joys surround my soul.

Where thou art present, heaven and happiness ensue: hell and damnation fill the breast where thou art absent. While God withdraws, I am encompassed with darkness and despair: the sun and stars shine with an uncomfortable lustre: the faces of my friends grow tiresome: the smiles of angels would fail to cheer my languishing spirit. I grow unacquainted with tranquillity: peace and joy are empty sounds to me, and words without a meaning.

Tell me not of glory and pleasure: there are no such things without my God: while he withdraws, what delight can these trifles afford? All that amuses mankind are but dreams of happiness, shades and fantastic appearances. What compensation can they

make for an infinite good departed? All nature cannot repair my loss: heaven and earth would offer their treasures in vain; not all the kingdoms of this world, nor the thrones of archangels, could give me a recompense for an absent God.

O where can my grief find redress? whence can I draw satisfaction, when the fountain of joy seals up its streams? My sorrows are hopeless till he returns: without him my night will never see a dawn, but extend to everlasting darkness: content and joy will be eternal strangers to my breast. Had I all things within the compass of creation to delight me, his frowns would blast the whole enjoyment: unreconciled to God, my soul would be for ever at variance with itself.

Even now, while I believe thy glory hid from me but with a transient eclipse, while I wait for thy return as for the dawning day, my soul suffers inexpressible agonies at the delay: the minutes seem to linger, and the days are lengthened into ages; but, Lord, what keener anguish should I feel, did I think thy presence had totally forsaken me—did I imagine thy glory should no more arise on my soul! My spirits fail at the supposi-

tion: I cannot face the dreadful apprehensions of my God for ever gone. Is it not hell in its most horrid prospect, eternal darkness, and the undying worm, infinite ruin, and irreparable damage? Compared to this, what were all the plagues that earth could threaten, or hell invent? what is disgrace, and poverty, and pain? what is all that mortals fear, real or imaginary evils? They are nothing, compared to the terrors which the thought of losing my God excites.

O thou who art my boundless treasure, my infinite delight, my all, my ineffable portion, can I part with thee? I may see without light, and breathe without air, sooner than be blessed without my God. Happiness separate from thee were a contradiction, and impossibility (if I dare speak it) to Omnipotence itself. I feel a flame which the most glorious creation could not satisfy, an emptiness which nothing but infinite love could fill. I must find thee, or weary myself in an eternal pursuit. Nothing shall divert me in the endless search, no obstacle shall fright me back, no allurement withhold me—nothing shall flatter or relieve my impatience—my bliss, my heaven, my all, depends on the success. Show me

where thou art, O my God : conduct me into thy presence, and let thy love confine me there for ever.



XVI. APPEAL TO GOD, CONCERNING THE SUPREMACY OF LOVE TO HIM.

O GOD, when I cease to love and praise thee, let me cease to breathe and live : when I forget thee, let me forget the name of my happiness, and let every pleasing idea be razed from my memory.

When thou art not my supreme delight, let all things else deceive me : let me grow unacquainted with peace, and seek repose in vain : let delusion mock my gayest hopes : let my desires find no satisfaction till they are terminated all in thee. When I forget the satisfaction of thy love, O my God, let pleasure be a stranger to my soul : when I prefer not that to my chiefest joy, let me be insensible of all delight : when thy benignity is not dearer to me than life, let that life become my burden and my pain.

Search the inmost recess of my heart, and if thou findest any competitor there, remove

the darling vanity, and blot every name but thine from my breast. Let me find nothing but emptiness in the creature, when I forsake the all-sufficient Creator: let the streams be cut off, when I wander away and abandon the fountain. Let me be destitute of assistance, when I cease to rely on thee: let my lips be for ever silent when they refuse to acknowledge thy benefits, and make not thee the subject of their higher praise. Let no joyful strains enter at my ears, when thy name is not the most delightful sound they can convey to my heart.

I have been pronouncing heavy curses on myself, if thy love be not my chief blessing; yet O, my dearest good, my portion, and my only felicity, might I not go on farther still, and even venture immortal joys on the sincerity of my love to thee? Blessed Lord, forgive these dangerous efforts of a mortal tongue, which are the mere outbreaks of a fervent affection. I could even dare to pledge all my hopes and pretensions to future happiness, (and O, let not my heart deceive me!) I think I could risk them all, if thou thyself art not the object of my brightest hopes, and the light of thy coun-

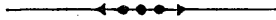
tenance the height of that expected happiness.

If I desire any thing in heaven or on earth in comparison of thee, I am almost ready to say, banish me as an eternal exile from the light of paradise—even that paradise would be melancholy darkness without thee; and the obscure corner of the creation, blessed with thy presence, would be more agreeable. O! where could I be happy, remote from thee? what imaginable good could supply thy absence? Say, O my God! do I not love thee?

Shall I call thy holy angels to witness? shall I call heaven and earth to witness? will not the most high God himself, the possessor of heaven and earth, condescend to witness the ardor and sincerity of my love?

With what pleasure do I reflect on the obligations by which I have devoted myself to thee! My soul collects itself, and with an entire assent gives up all its powers to thee: I would bind myself unto thee beyond all the ties that mortals know. Ye ministers of light, give me your flames, and teach me your celestial forms: let all be noble and pathetic, and solemn as your immortal vows, and I will

joyfully go through them all to bind myself to my God for ever. Say, now, ye heavens and earth, say, ye holy angels, and O! thou all-knowing God, say, do I not love thee?



XVII. A DEVOUT RAPTURE; OR LOVE TO GOD
INEXPRESSIBLE.

THOU radiant sun, thou moon, and all the sparkling stars, how gladly would I leave your pleasant light to see the face of God! Ye crystal streams, ye groves and flowery lawns, my innocent delights, how joyful could I leave you to meet that blissful prospect! and you, delightful faces of my friends, I would this moment quit you all, to see him whom my soul loves,—so loves, that I can find no words to express the unutterable ardor. Not as the miser loves his wealth, nor the ambitious his grandeur; not as the libertine loves his pleasure, or the generous man his friends: these are flat similitudes to describe such an intense passion as mine.

Not as a man scorched in a fever longs for

a cooling draught—not as a weary traveller wishes for soft repose: my restless desires admit of no equal comparison from these.

I love my friends: my vital breath, and the light of heaven, are dear to me; but should I say I love my God as I love these, I should belie the sacred flame which aspires to infinity. 'Tis thee, abstractedly thee, O uncreated Beauty, that I love: in thee my wishes all terminate: in thee, as in their blissful centre, all my desires meet, and there they must be eternally fixed: it is thou alone that must constitute my everlasting happiness.

Were the harps of angels silent, there would be harmony for me in the whispers of thy love: were the fields of light darkened, thy smiles would bless me with everlasting day: the visions of thy face will attract my eyes, nor give me leisure to waste a look on other objects to all eternity, any farther than God is to be seen in his creatures. All their beams of grace, and joy, and glory, are derived from thee, the eternal sun, and will merit my attention no farther than they reflect thy image, or discover thy excellences.

Even at this distance, encompassed with

the shades of death, and the mists of darkness—in these cold, melancholy regions, when a ray of thy love breaks in on my soul, when through the clouds I can trace but one feeble beam, even that obscures all human glory, and gives me a contempt for whatever mortality can boast. What wonders then will the open vision of thy face effect, when I shall enjoy it in so sublime a degree, that the magnificence of the skies will not draw my regard, nor the converse of angels divert my thoughts from thee? Thou wilt engross my everlasting attention; and I should abound in felicity, if I had nothing to entertain me but immediate communion with the infinite Divinity.

Mend thy pace, old lazy Time, and shake thy heavy sand: make shorter circles, ye rolling planets: when will your destined courses be fulfilled? Thou restless Sun, how long wilt thou travel the celestial road? when will thy starry walk be finished? when will the commissioned angel arrest thee in thy progress, and, lifting up his hands, swear by the unutterable name, *that time shall be no more?* O happy period! my impatient soul springs forward to salute thee, and leave the lagging

days, and months, and years, far behind. "Make haste, my beloved, and be like a roe, or a young hart on the spicy mountains."

I pine, I die for a sight of thy countenance: O! turn the veil aside, blow away the separating cloud, pull out the pins of this tabernacle, break the cords, and let fall the curtain of mortality! O let it interpose no longer between me and my perfect bliss. I feel those flames of divine love which are unextinguishable as the lights of heaven, nor death itself shall quench the sacred ardor.

Ye ministers of light, ye guardians of the just, stand and witness to my vows; and in an humble dependence on thy grace, O Jesus, may I not venture to bid these thy flaming ministers protest against me when I change my love, and stand my accusers at the last judgment? When I prove false to thee, may I not venture to say to them all, Bring in your awful evidence, and proclaim my perjury?

For you have listen'd while the sacred name
That kindles in each heavenly breast a flame—
You listen'd while it melted on my tongue,
Flow'd from my lips, and graced the midnight song.

Bless'd was the time, and sweetly fled the hours,
While holy love employ'd my noblest powers:
The heavens appear'd, and the propitious skies
Unveil'd their inmost glories to my eyes.
O! stay, I cried, ye happy moments, stay,
Nor in your flight snatch these delights away:
I ask no more the rising sun to view—
To mortals and their hopes I bid adieu.

These heavens and this earth have been witness to my vows: the holy angels have been witnesses, and all will join together to condemn me when I violate my faith. Strengthen and confirm it, O my Saviour, and make the bonds of it immortal.

If I were only to reason upon this subject, I might say, What motive could earth, what could hell, what could heaven itself propose, to tempt my soul to change its love? what could they lay in the balance against an infinite good? what could be thrown in as a stake against the favor of God? Ask the happy souls who know what the light of his countenance imparts, who drink in joy and immortality from his smiles—ask them what value they set on their enjoyments? ask them what in heaven or on earth should purchase one moment's interval of their bliss? ask some radiant seraph, amidst the fervency of

his raptures, at what price he values his happiness? and when these have named the purchase, earth and hell may try to balance mine. Let them spread the baits that tempt deluded men to ruin: let riches, honor, beauty, and bewitching pleasures, appear in all their charms, the sensuality of the present and past ages, the *Persian* delicacy and the *Roman* pride: let them uncover the golden mines, and disclose the ruby sparkling in its bed: let them open the veins of sapphire, and show the diamond glittering in its rock: let them all be thrown into the balance—alas! their weight is too little and too light. Let the pageantries of state be added, imperial titles, and the ensigns of majesty: put in all that boundless vanity imagines, or wild ambition craves, crowns and sceptres, regal vestments and golden thrones, the scale still mounts. Throw in the world entire—'tis unsubstantial, and light as airy vanity.

Are these thy highest boasts, O deluded world? Ye ministers of darkness, have you nothing else to offer? are these your utmost proposals? are these a compensation for the FAVOR OF GOD? Alas, that boundless word has a meaning which outweighs them all! in-

finite delight, inconceivable joys, are expressed in it: the light of his countenance signifies more than angels can describe, or mortality imagine; and shall I quit all that an everlasting heaven means, for empty shadows?

Go, ye baffled tempters, go offer your toys to madmen and fools: they all vanish under my scorn, and cannot yield so much as an amusement to my aspiring thoughts. The sun, in all its spacious circuit, beholds nothing to tempt my wishes. These winding skies, in all their ample round, contain nothing equal to my desires: my ambition has far different ends, and other prospects in view: nothing below the joys of angels can satisfy me. Let me explore the worlds of life and beauty, and find a path to the dazzling recesses of the Most High: let me drink at the fountain-head of pleasure, and derive all that I want from original and uncreated fulness and felicity.

O divine love! let me launch out into thy pleasurable depths, and be swallowed up of thee: let me plunge at once in immortal joy, and lose myself in the infinite ocean of happiness.

Till then I pine for my celestial country—

till then I murmur to the winds and streams,
and tell the solitary shades my grief. The
groves are conscious to my complaints, and
the moon and stars listen to my sighs. By
their silent lights I talk over my heavenly
concerns, and give a vent to my divine affec-
tions in mortal language: then looking up-
ward, I grow impatient to reach that milky
way, the seat of joy and immortality.

Come love, come life, and that bless'd day
For which I languish, come away:
When this dry soul these eyes shall see,
And drink the unseal'd source of thee.

O come, I cry, thou whom my soul loveth!
I would go on, but want expression, and
vainly struggle with the unutterable thought.

Tell me, ye sons of light, who feel the force
of celestial fires, in what language you paint
their violence? Or do the tongues of seraphs
falter? Does the language of paradise want
emphasis here, and immortal eloquence fail?
Surely your happiness is more perfect than
all your descriptions of it: heaven echoes to
your charming notes, as far as they reach,
while divine love, which is all your song, is
infinite, and knows no limits of degree or
duration.

Yet I would say, Come, gentle spirit, come
and instruct me in your art! lend me a golden
harp, and guide the sacred flights: let me
imitate your devout strains: let me copy out
your harmony; and then

Some of the fairest choir above
Shall flock around my song,
With joy to hear the name they love,
Sound from a mortal tongue.

Blessed and immortal creatures! I long
to join with you in your celestial style of
adoration and love. I long to learn your
ecstasies of worship and joy, in a language
which mortals cannot pronounce, and to
speak the divine passion of my soul, in words
which are now unspeakable.



XVIII. SELF-REPROOF FOR INACTIVITY.

Is it possible that I should one day be
wrapped almost into the third heavens, and
ere a few weeks have passed over me, I
should find myself creeping among the in-
sects of the earth, and almost as meanly
busied as they? Can divine love, which ex-

alted me lately into flaming transports, so far subside and grow cool within me? can it leave me so inactive as I now feel myself? What shall I do to shame my conscience with reproaches, and renew the flame of religious zeal and vigor?

Alas! how does the activity of men about the little affairs of human life, condemn my negligence in matters of everlasting consequence! Does the fond lover with such anxiety and impatience pursue the object of his wishes; and shall not divine beauty and infinite loveliness inflame my desires to a nobler height, and excite my languishing devotion?

Are the ambitious so restless and solicitous to make themselves great, and to purchase the veneration of fools? do they lay such mighty projects, and compass their designs with such pain and difficulty, for mere pageantry and gaudy trifles; and shall I, who am a candidate for heaven, a probationer for celestial dignity, lose my title, for want of diligence? shall I faint in the noble strife, when God and angels are ready to assist me, and every moment's toil will be recompensed with eternal ages of rest and triumph?

See, see, the moments fly, the labor shortens, and the immense reward draws near: the palm of victory, the starry crown, are in view: the happy realms and fields of light entertain me with their glorious prospect. Rouse thee, my soul, to the most active pursuit of those felicities: waken all thy sprightly powers: and let it never, never be thy reproach, that the vigor and intensesness of thy labors fall short of the pretensions of thy desires; or that thy holy industry should sink so far below the fervor of those affections, which, in a devout hour, thou hast pronounced *inexpressible*.

O Lord, what a mutable thing is man! what frailty works in this flesh and blood, and hangs heavy upon our better powers! 'Tis grace, divine grace alone, can keep alive that immortal spark within us, which came first from heaven, and first taught our hearts to arise and spring upward. Preserve and complete thy own work, almighty grace.

XIX. A JOYFUL VIEW OF APPROACHING DEATH.

O DEATH, where is thy sting? where is thy boasted victory? the conquest is mine: I shall pass in triumph through thy dark dominions; and, through the grace of the Son of God, my divine leader, I shall appear there, not a captive, but a conqueror.

O King of terrors, where are thy formidable looks? I can see nothing dreadful in thy aspect: thou appearest with no tokens of defiance, nor dost thou come with summons from a severe judge, but gentle invitations from my blessed Redeemer, who has passed gloriously through thy territories in his way to his throne.

Thrice welcome, thou kind messenger of my liberty and happiness! a thousand times more welcome than jubilee to the wretched slave, than pardon to a condemned malefactor. I am going from darkness and confinement to immense light and perfect liberty: from these tempestuous regions to the soft and peaceful climes above: from pain and grief to everlasting ease and tranquillity.

For the toils of virtue, I shall immediately receive its vast rewards : for the reproach of fools, the honor and applause of angels. In a few minutes I shall be higher than yonder stars, and brighter far than they. I shall range the boundless ether, and breathe the balmy airs of paradise. I shall presently behold my glorious Maker, and sing hallelujahs to my exalted Saviour.

And now come, ye bright guardians of the just, conduct me through the unknown and trackless ether, for you pass and repass the celestial road continually : you have commission not to leave me till I arrive at *Mount Zion*, the heavenly *Jerusalem*, the city of the living God : till I come to the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect.

Hold out, faith and patience : it is but a little while, and your work will be at an end ; but a few moments, and these sighs and groans shall be converted into everlasting hallelujahs ; but a few weary steps, and the journey of life will be finished. One effort more, and I shall have gained the top of the everlasting hills, and from yonder bright summit shall presently look back on the dangers I

have escaped in my travels through the wilderness.

Roll faster on, ye lingering minutes: the nearer my joys, the more impatient I am to seize them. After these painful agonies, how greedily shall I drink in immortal ease and pleasure! Break away, ye thick clouds, begone, ye envious shades, and let me behold the glories ye conceal: let me see the promised land, and survey the happy regions I am immediately to possess. How long will ye interpose between me and my bright sun, between me and the unclouded face of God? Look up, my soul, see how sweetly those reviving beams break forth! how they dispel the gloom and gild the shades of death.

O blessed eternity! with what a cheerful splendor dost thou dawn on my soul! With thee come liberty, and peace, and love and endless felicity; but pain, and sorrow, and tumult, and death, and darkness, vanish before thee for ever. I am just upon the shores of those happy realms, where uninterrupted day and eternal spring reside: yonder are the delectable hills and harmonious vales which continually echo to the songs of angels. There the blissful fields extend their verdure,

and there the immortal groves ascend. But how dazzling is thy prospect, O city of God, of whom such glorious things are spoken! In thee "there shall be no more night, nor need of the sun or moon," for the throne of God and of the Lamb is in the midst of thee; "and the nations that are saved shall walk in thy light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honor unto thee; and there the glorious Lord shall be to us a place of defence—a place of streams and broad rivers;" and the voice of joy, and the shout of triumph, shall be heard in thee for ever.

There holy souls perpetual Sabbaths^d keep,
And never are concerned for food or sleep:
There new-come saints with wreaths of light are crown'd;
While ivory harps and silver trumpets sound:
There flaming seraphs sacred hymns begin,
And raptured cherubs loud responses sing.

"My eyes shall there behold the King in his beauty;" and O! how ravishing will the aspects of his love be! What unutterable ecstasies shall I feel when I meet those smiles which enlighten heaven, and exhilarate all the celestial regions—when I shall view the beatific glory, without one interposing cloud, to eternity—when I shall drink

my fill at the fountains of joy, and in those rivers of pleasure that flow from his right hand for ever.



XX. A DEVOUT RESIGNATION OF SELF TO THE
DIVINE POWER AND GOODNESS.

My all-sufficient Friend, "my shield, and my exceeding great reward," I have enough: unbounded avarice can covet nothing beyond thee: the soul whom thou dost not suffice, deserves to be eternally poor. Thou art my supreme happiness, my voluntary choice: I took thy love for my treasure in that blessed day when I entered into covenant with thee, and became thine: I made no articles with thee for the friendships, the honors, and pleasures of the world, but solemnly renounced them all, and chose thy favor for my single inheritance, leaving the conduct of my life entirely to thee.

These were my vows, and these I have often renewed; and shall I now retract such sacred obligations, and alter a choice so just and reasonable? Forbid it, gracious God! let me never be guilty of such madness. The

world has often disappointed my most confident expectations, but thou hast never deceived me. In all my distress I have found thee a certain refuge, "my shield, my fortress, my high tower, my deliverer, my rock, and him in whom I trust." When there was none to save me, thy powerful hand did set me free: thou hast redressed my grievances, and dissipated my fears: thou hast brought me light out of obscurity, and turned my darkness into day.

When the world could afford me nothing but tempest and disorder, with thee I have found repose and undisturbed tranquillity. Thou hast been my long-experienced refuge, my unfailing confidence, and I steadfastly depend on thee for my future conduct. I cannot err when guided by infinite wisdom: I must be safe in the arms of eternal love, to which I humbly resign myself. Let me have riches or poverty, honor or contempt, whatever comes from thy hand shall be thankfully received. I would hear no voice but thine, nor make a step but where I am following thee.

If thou wouldst leave me to choose for myself, I would resign the choice again to thee.

I dread nothing more than the guidance of my own blind desires: I tremble at the thoughts of such a fatal liberty: avert, gracious God, that miserable freedom. Thou foreseest all events, and, at one single view, dost look through eternal consequences; therefore do thou determine my circumstances, not to gratify my own wild desires, but to advance thy glory.

Thou hast an unquestionable right to dispose of me: I am thine by necessary ties and voluntary engagements, which I thankfully acknowledge, and solemnly renew: deliberately and entirely I put myself into thy hands. Whatever interest I have in this world, I sacrifice to thee, and leave my dearest enjoyments to thy disposal, acknowledging it my greatest happiness to be guided by thee.

“Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him?” that thou, who art supremely blessed, and independently happy, shouldst concern thyself with human affairs, and condescend to make our wants as much thy care as if mortal miseries could reach thee and interrupt immortal blessedness? Thou wouldst make us sensible of thine indulgence by the

most tender similitudes : a father's gentle care but faintly shadows thine, and all we can conceive of human pity falls short of thy compassion. Thou dost seem to share in our calamities, and sympathize in all our grief. No friend flies to our assistance with half the speed with which love brings thee ; nor canst thou ever want methods to relieve those that confide in thee.

Thy providence finds or makes its way through all oppositions : the streams shall roll back to their fountains : the sun shall stand still, and the course of nature be reversed, rather than thou want means to bring thy purposes to pass. No obstacle puts a stand to thy designs, nor obstructs thy methods : it is thy will that makes nature and necessity : who can stay thy hand, or say unto thee, *What dost thou ?* Thy counsel shall stand, and thou wilt do all thy pleasure. Nothing is impossible for thee to accomplish : wherever I cast my eyes, I see instances of thy power : the extended firmament, the sun and stars, tell me what thou art able to perform : they attest thy omnipotence, and rebuke my unbelief. The whole creation pleads for thee, and condemns my infidelity.

Almighty God, forgive my diffidence, while I confess it is most inexcusable. Thy hand is not shortened, nor are the springs of thy bounty sealed: thy ancient miracles have not exhausted thy strength, nor hath perpetual beneficence impoverished thee: thy power remains undiminished, and thy mercy endureth for ever. That dazzling attribute surrounds me with transporting glories: which way soever I turn, I meet the bright conviction: I cannot recall a day of my past life on which some signature of thy goodness is not stamped.

O who hath tasted of thy clemency
In greater measure, or more oft, than I?
Which way so'er I turn my face or feet,
I see thy mercy and thy glory meet.

In whatever thou hast granted, or whatever thou hast denied me, thy beneficence has mingled with every dispensation: thou hast not taken the advantage of my follies, nor been severe to my sins, but hast remembered my frame, and treated me with the utmost indulgence. Glory be to thy name for ever.

XXI. PLEADING FOR PARDON AND HOLINESS.

IMMORTAL spring of life, the fountain of all existence, the first and last, "without beginning of days or end of years:" before the heavens were created thou hast been, and shalt remain unchanged while they wax old and decay. Thou art infinite, blessed in thyself: thy glory admits of no addition: the praises of angels cannot heighten thy happiness, nor the blasphemies of hell diminish it. Thou canst do every thing, and thy power finds no obstacle. "Thou madest heaven and earth, the sea, and the fountains of water: thou dost according to thy will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: thou holdest the waters in the hollow of thy hand, and measurest out the heavens with a span: thou comprehendest the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighest the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance: thou coverest thyself with light as with a garment," and art surrounded with inaccessible splendor: thou art glorious in holiness, fearful in praises: the heavens are not clean in thy sight, and thou chargest thine

angels with folly: what then is man, that drinketh in iniquity like water? "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou dost thus visit him?" 'Tis because thou art good, and thy mercy endureth for ever: mercy is thy prevailing attribute. Thou art compassionate, and infinitely gracious, and hast fully manifested thy love and beneficence to the race of man, in the glorious method of our redemption from everlasting bondage and death by thy Son Jesus.

Therefore, with the lowest reverence, and most humble gratitude, I desire to prostrate myself before thee, acknowledging it my greatest honor and undeserved privilege to approach the Lord, and bow myself before the High God—I that am unworthy to utter thy tremendous name, or once to lift up my eyes to heaven. To my own confusion I here confess I have abused the mercy which I now implore, and injured that goodness and forbearance by my sins, which I am now addressing myself to. I have forfeited the very benefits I ask, and despised those sacred privileges which I am forced to plead: I can use scarce any motive but what would carry

in it my own condemnation. Shall I implore thy mercy by the gracious terms of the new covenant, sealed by the blood of thy eternal Son? Alas! that gracious covenant I have violated, and profaned its sacred seals: I have sinned against the clearest light, and the tenderest instances of love: I have not only broken my obligations to thee as my Creator, but the stronger engagements of my adoption, even the glorious privilege of being admitted into thy family, and numbered among the children of God.

But still those very circumstances that aggravate my guilt exalt thy mercy: here the freeness and magnificence of thy grace will display itself: here thou wilt answer the indulgent title of a father in its tenderest extent. I have no sins too great for infinite clemency to pardon. Thou art God, and not man; and, as the heavens are high above the earth, so high are thy ways of compassion above all human methods.

I dare not set bounds to thy goodness, nor affirm, that *thus far, and no farther*, divine patience extends. Thou hast pardoned and restored me to thy favor too often for me now to despair: my penitent sighs were never re-

jected, nor my humble request unanswered. I have always found the heavens open, and the throne of God accessible through the blood of a Redeemer. By his agony and bloody sweat, by his cross and passion, by his painful death and glorious resurrection, I implore thy pardon: he has made a full atonement, and divine justice will demand no further satisfaction. "To him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

O blessed Jesus! the hope of the *Gentiles*, the salvation of the ends of the earth, the great Messiah, the promised Saviour, who dost answer these glorious titles in their utmost signification: to thee, my certain, my experienced refuge, I fly: O Son of God, hear me! O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on me! O eternal Spirit, the promised Comforter, come with all thy sacred consolations: come, and be as dew to the drooping flowers, as rain to the parched ground. O! come with thy reviving light, and dispel the darkness that beclouds my soul: break in like the sun after a melancholy night. One beam of thine

could melt this frozen, this obdurate heart, and kindle in my soul the spark of holy love: breathe upon my cold affections, and raise them to a sacred flame.

Searcher of hearts! from whom nothing is concealed, whose penetrating eye finds out hypocrisy in its darkest disguise: thou knowest the desires of my soul, and art my impartial witness, that I kneel not here for the riches and honors of the world; that I am not prostrate before thee for length of days or pleasure; but that it is the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, that I seek. Give me out my portion with the rich and great, but let me have my humble lot with thy children: let me bear contempt and derision, and suffer reproach with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season.

Thy favor is the end of all my wishes, the constant subject of my prayer. O! thou, whose ears are open to the wants of all thy creatures, who hearest the young ravens when they cry from their nest to thee, who givest the men of the world the transitory things they choose, wilt thou deny the desires which thou thyself dost inspire and approve! O

let me be filled with that righteousness which I hunger and thirst after; and be satisfied with thy likeness. Thou canst not be diminished, whatever perfection thou dost communicate to the creature—endless liberality could not make thee poor.

I ask not privileges above the capacity of my nature, nor aspire to the perfection of angels: I only beg that I may reach those heights of holiness and ^{the}divine love, which souls, invested with a mortal body like mine, and encumbered with the same human passions, have attained. But in vain I strive to imitate those bright examples thou hast set before me: without thy assistance, all my endeavors will prove successless. Thou knowest the frailty of my nature, and the mighty difficulties I have to encounter: I have not only the allurements of the world, but all the stratagems of hell to engage with, and a treacherous heart within, ready on all occasions to betray me into sin and endless perdition: O let my impotence and danger awaken thy compassion.

Remember thy former benignity, O Lord, and let that engage thee to grant me new supplies of that grace by which alone I shall

prove victorious. Thy bounty to any of the works of thy hands must always flow from the goodness of thy own nature; for what creature can pretend to merit any thing from thee? I would urge nothing but thy own infinite mercy, when I entreat thee not to let me perish, after the wonderful things thou hast done for my soul; after all the pledges thou hast given me of thy love, let not my follies provoke thee to forsake me; but remember thy covenant, and its gracious articles, and act according to thy own ineffable benignity, which has been the gracious motive of every favor I have received from thee.



XXII. A TRANSPORT OF GRATITUDE FOR
SAVING MERCY.

I BLESS a thousand times the happy day when first a beam of heavenly light broke in on my soul, when the day-star from on high visited me, and the celestial light began to dawn: I welcomed its cheerful lustre, and felt the sacred influence: the flames of holy love awoke, and holy joys were kindled.

The earth and all its pageantry disappeared, like clouds before the morning sun: the scenes of paradise were opened—seraphic pleasure and unutterable delights. All hail! I cried, ye unknown joys, ye unexperienced pleasures! compared to you, what is all I have relished till now? what is earthly beauty and harmony? what is all that mortals call charming and attractive? I never lived till now: I knew no more than the name of happiness till now! I have been in a dream during all the days of my folly and vanity, but now I awake to the life of heaven-born spirits, and taste the joys of angels.



XXIII. IMPORTUNATE REQUESTS FOR THE
RETURN OF GOD TO THE SOUL.

THOU great and glorious, thou invisible and universal Being, art thou no nearer to be approached? or do I search thee amiss? Is there a corner of the creation unvisited by thee, or any place exempt from thy presence? I trace thy footsteps through heaven and earth, but I cannot overtake thee.

Why do I seek thee, if thou art not here?
Or find thee not, if thou art everywhere?

Tell me, O my God, and my All, tell me,
where thou art to be found, for there is the
place of my rest. What imaginable good can
supply thy absence? Deprived of thee, all
that the world could offer would be like a
jest to a dying man, and provoke my aversion
and disdain. 'Tis a God that I seek.

My wishes stoop not to a lower aim,
Thou, thou hast kindled this immortal flame,
Which nothing could allay.

Adieu, adieu to all human things! Let
me find my God, the end of all my wishes.
Why dost thou keep back the face of thy
throne? why do the cloud and sacred dark-
ness conceal thee?

Thy voice produced the seas and spheres,
Bid the waves roll, and planets shine;
But nothing like thyself appears
Through all these various works of thine.

O thou fairer than all the works of thy
hands! wilt thou ever hide thyself from a
creature that loves and seeks thee with so
intense desire! I appeal to thee, O Lord,
are not my breathings after thee most hearty

and unfeigned? does not my soul pant after thee with a fervor which cannot be extinguished, and a sincerity which cannot be disguised?

For thee I pine, and am for thee undone;
As drooping flowers that want their parent sun.

How do my spirits languish for thee! No similitudes can express the vehemence of my desires: wealth and glory, friends and pleasure, lose their names compared to thee. To follow thee, I would leave them all behind: I would leave the whole creation, and bid the fields and sparkling skies adieu. Let the heavens and earth be no more: while thou endurest for ever, I can want no support: my being itself, with all its blessedness, depends entirely on thee. Place me far from the bounds of all creation, remote from all existence but thy own: in that ineffable solitude let me be lost, let me run the endless rounds of bliss. But alas! I flatter myself in vain with scenes of unattainable happiness. I will search for thee where I hope thou mayst be found. I cast my eyes to the bright regions above, and almost envy the happy beings that see thy face unveiled: I search for thee

in the flowery meadows, and listen for thee among the murmuring springs: then, silent and abstracted from human things, I search for thee in holy contemplation. 'Tis all in vain: nor fields, nor floods, nor clouds, nor stars, reveal thee.

Ye happy spirits, that meet his smiles, and hear his voice, direct a mournful wanderer, while I seek him whom my soul loves, while I sigh and complain, and cast my languishing eyes to yonder happy mansions. Fain would I penetrate the starry pavilions, and look through the separating firmament: O! that thou wouldst divide the clouds, that thou wouldst rend the heavens, and give me one glimpse of thy glory; that thou wouldst display thy beauty, and, in the midst of these earthly scenes of amusing vanity, give me one moment's interval of celestial blessedness!

One look of mercy from thy eye,
One whisper of thy voice,
Exceeds a whole eternity
Employ'd in carnal joys.

Could I the spacious earth command,
Or the more boundless sea,
For one dear hour at thy right hand
I'd give them both away.

If things were put into just balances, and computed aright, for the first moment of this satisfaction, I am ready to say, the whole creation would be cheaply lost: how gladly would I resign all for such a bliss! Adieu to human things: let me find my God, the end of all my wishes: 'tis he whom I seek, 'tis he alone can satisfy my infinite desires. O! why dost thou withdraw? why thus long conceal thyself? Where dost thou retire? Nor earth nor heaven reply to my repeated calls.

Let me invoke thee by every gracious title. My God, and the God of my fathers! "from one generation to another thou hast been our dwelling-place:" the claim has descended from age to age. O! forget not thy covenant, forget not the blessings entailed on me: forget not the prayers and tears by which my pious ancestors have engaged thy mercy for me, forget not their vows and solemn dedication of me to thee. O! recall thy ancient favors, and renew thy former mercy to a family which has been thine in a succession of ages.

Let me invoke thee now by a nearer propriety: My covenant God, my Father, and

my Friend! If, by all those tender names I have ever known thee, forget me not.

By those sacred engagements, O Lord, I entreat thy return. If all thy past favors were real, if all was waking bliss, and not a gay delusion, O restore my heaven again. Life of my soul, light of my eyes, return: come, and bring all thy sacred consolations once again: let me experience those holy joys that thy presence imparts: once again let me hear thy voice, and once again be blessed with thy smiles.

O! hear, and to my longing eyes
Restore thy wonted light;
And suddenly, or I shall sleep
In everlasting night.

Blessed Saviour! in thee we behold the face of God as a reconciled Father; and dost thou withdraw thyself? O how welcome will thy return be! how like the breakings of immortal day will thy presence cheer me! how dearly shall I prize my happiness! how fearful shall I be of every thing that would offend thee! how joyful in the blessed discovery and possession of thy love! I'd whisper my bliss to the listening streams and groves:

I'd carve thy passion on the bark,
And every wounded tree
Shall droop, and bear some mystic mark
That Jesus died for me.

The swains shall wonder when they read,
Inscribed on all the grove,
That Heaven itself came down and bled
To win a mortal's love.

But why do I flatter myself with these delightful scenes? I find thee absent still: I mourn and complain as one unpitied. What is life while thou art absent? O! return, and bless me with thy presence, thou who knowest my distresses, and art acquainted with my secret cares. Thou who art the witness of my midnight sighs, and dost hear when, at the dawning day, I call thee; but still thou answerest not, and seemest deaf to my prayers. I am, 'tis true, a worthless wretch; but, vile as I am, thou hast, in thy immense compassion, brought me into covenant with thee. *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* But for this confidence I were undone; but for this beam of hope I were lost in eternal darkness. "Why art thou disquieted, O my soul, and why art thou cast down within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise

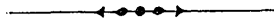
him for the light of his countenance :” I shall yet welcome his return, I shall yet hear his cheering voice, and meet his favorable smiles.

But why, O my God, this long suspense? Why do these intervals of night and darkness abide upon me, and torment my heart so long? Wilt thou deny a bliss so easily granted? I ask not more than is lawful for mortality to wish: I ask not the visions of angels here below, nor the beatitudes of perfected spirits: I ask but what thou hast bid me seek, and given me hopes to obtain: I ask that sacred fellowship, that ineffable communion, with which thou favorest thy saints.

O! let me hear those heavenly whispers that give them the foretastes of immortal pleasure: let me be sensible of those divine approaches that kindle celestial ardor in their soul: let me meet those beams that darken all mortal beauty: let me enjoy, at this earthly distance, those smiles that are the bliss of angels in heaven. Though 'tis but darkly, and afar off, yet let me feel their influence: it will brighten the passage of life, it will direct me through its mazes, and gild

its rough and gloomy paths: it will raise the flames of sacred love, it will waken the divine principle within me, and set it a glowing through all my powers. I shall abandon, I shall forget the vanities below, and the glories of the world will be no more; but while thou, O my God, hidest thy face, I lose my sun, I languish and die; yet to thee I will lift up my eyes, to thee I will lift up my soul.

Come, Lord, and never from me go:
 This world's a darksome place:
 I find no pleasure here below,
 When thou dost veil thy face.



XXIV. BREATHING AFTER GOD, AND WEARY
 OF THE WORLD.

'Tis no mean beauty of the ground
 That has allured my eyes:
 I faint beneath a nobler wound,
 Nor love below the skies.

If words can reach the heights of love and gratitude, let me pour out the secret ardor of my soul! O let it not offend thy greatness, that dust and vanity adores and loves thee.

If thou hadst given me other capacities, and formed any thing more suitable to my wishes, I might have found a lower happiness, and been content with something below the infinite Deity; but the scanty creation affords nothing to satisfy me, and I follow thee by a divine instinct and mere necessity of nature.

My life is useless, and my being insignificant, without thee: my reason has no proper employment: love, the noblest passion of my soul, has no object to answer its dignity. I am reduced to absolute poverty: my nature is entirely ruined: I am lost, eternally lost, undone, and abandoned to despair, if I am deprived of thee. There can be no reparation made for an infinite loss: nothing can be instead of God to my soul.

I have willingly renounced all things else for thy sake: all the sentiments of tenderness and delight that my soul ever feels for any earthly object, is mere indifference compared to my love for thee; and it grows into hatred when that object stands as thy rival or competitor. This is the conquering, the superior flame, that draws in and swallows up all the other ardors of my nature. My engagements with all terrestrial things are

broken: the names of father, of brother, or of friend, are no more: abstracted from thee, these tender titles give me neither confidence nor joy, and are mere insignificant names, but as thou dost give them an emphasis: they are nothing at all without thee; and with thee, what finite good can be an addition?

The soul can hold no more, for God is all:
He only equals its capacious grasp,
He only overfills to spaces infinite.

Thou art my God, and I have enough: my soul is satisfied. I am entirely at rest. Divide the vain, the perishing creation, to the miserable wretches that ask no other portion: let them, unenvied, possess the honors, and riches, and pleasures of the world: with a lavish hand divide them away: these things are but as the dust of the balance to the happy soul that knows what the light of thy countenance imports. After that there can be no relish left for the low delights of mortality.

Lost in the high enjoyments of thy love,
What glorious mortal could my envy move?

Ye ineffable delectations of divine love, let

me have no sentiments of pleasure left but for you. My God, revealing his glories and his graces in Jesus Christ his Son, is sufficient for my eternal entertainment.

What if all former ideas of visible things were wiped from my soul? what if I had no imagination, no memory, no traces left of any thing but the joys I have found in thy presence, and the assurances of thy everlasting favor? Those are the only past moments I recall with pleasure; and O! let all the vast eternity before me be spent in these satisfactions.

Vanish, ye terrestrial scenes! fly away, ye vain objects of sense! I resign all those poor and limited faculties by which you are enjoyed: let me be insensible to all your impressions, if they do not lead me to my God. Let chaos come again, and the fair face of nature become a universal blank: let her glowing beauties all fade away, and those divine characters she wears be effaced, I shall yet be happy: the God of nature, and the original of all beauty, is my God.

What if the sun were extinguished in the skies, and all the ethereal lamps had burned out their golden flames? I shall dwell in

light and immortal day, for my God will be ever with me. When the groves shall no more renew their verdure, nor the fields and valleys boast any longer their flowery pride: when all these lower heavens, and this earth, are mingled in universal ruin, and these material images of things are no more, I shall see new regions of beauty and pleasure for ever opening themselves in the divine essence, with all their original glories.

But O! how various, how boundless, how transporting, will the prospect be! O when shall I bid adieu to phantoms and delusions, and converse with eternal realities? when shall I drink at the fountain-head of essential life and blessedness?

And then,

O what!—but ask not of the tongues of men,
For angels cannot tell! Let it suffice,
Thyself, my soul, shall feel thy own full joys,
And hold them fast for ever.

O! break my fetters, for I must be gone.
Bring my soul out of prison! I am straitened,
the whole creation is too narrow for me:
I sicken at this confinement, and groan
and pant for liberty. How sweet are the
thoughts of enlargement! My soul is already

on the wing, and practices imaginary flights: I seem to reach the heaven of heavens, where God himself resides. It is good for me to be here.

But ah, how soon the clouds of mortal sense
Arise, and veil the charming vision!

Alas! what do I here in this waste and dreadful wilderness, this dismal region, where our delights are vanishing, and the very glimpses of future felicity we enjoy, are so soon overshadowed and surrounded with real horrors? Alas! what do I here, wasting that breath in sighs and endless complaints, that was given me to bless and praise the infinite Creator? Alas! what do I here among strangers and enemies, in this wild and inhospitable place, far from my home, and all the objects of my solid delights?

My wishes, hopes, my pleasures, and my love,
My thoughts and noblest passions, are above.

What do I here in the dominions of death and sin, in the precincts and ranges of the powers of darkness? Here they lay their toils, and set their fatal snares; but, Lord, what part have they in me? I have bid defiance to the powers of darkness in thy

strength, and renounced my share in the vanities of the world. I am a subject of another kingdom, and dare not enter into any terms of peace and amity with the irreconcilable adversaries of God and my soul, which inhabit these treacherous and sinful regions. "The friendship of this world is enmity with God." Death and destruction are in its smiles! I stand on my guard, and am every moment in danger of surprise. O! when will my deliverance come from on high?

When, my soul,

O when shall thy release from cumbrous flesh
Pass the great seal of Heaven? What happy hour
Shall give thy thoughts a loose to soar, and trace
The intellectual world?

What glorious scenes shall open when once this mortal partition falls, when these walls of clay shall totter and sink down into dust! Ye waters of life, ye torrents of immortal pleasure, how impetuous will you then roll in me, and swell and fill up all the capacities of joy in my nature! Every faculty shall then be filled, and every wish shall end in unutterable fruition. "When I awake into immortal light, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness."

These expressive desires will die into everlasting raptures: hope and languishing expectation will be no more; but present, complete, and unbounded satisfaction will surround me. My God, my God himself, shall be my infinite, my unutterable joy: all the avenues of pleasure shall be opened before me, the scenes of beauty and prospects of delight. "Everlasting joy shall be upon my head, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever."

There will be no more intervals of grief and sin: sin, that insupportable evil, that worst, that heaviest burden. Here the painful and deadly pressure lies: it is this that hangs as a weight on all my joys; but, thanks be to my God, I can say, I sincerely detest and hate this vilest of slaveries, this cursed bondage of corruption: I long for the glorious liberty of the sons of God: I groan under this load of flesh, this burden of mortality, this body of death.*

But grant, O Lord, that I may with pa

* Mrs. Rowe does not appear to have had clear views of the Christian's privilege to be cleansed from all sin in this life, and to be preserved blameless in that state, until exalted to the kingdom of glory.—[T. O. S.]

tience continue in well-doing, and at last obtain glory and immortality; through my Redeemer's righteousness. "Sanctify me through thy word of truth;"—remember this request of my glorious Advocate.



XXV. A PRAYER FOR SPEEDY SANCTIFICATION.

O LORD GOD, great and holy, all-sufficient and full of grace, if thou shouldst bid me form a wish, and take whatsoever in heaven or in earth I had to ask, it should not be the kingdoms of this world, nor the crowns of princes: no, nor should it be the wreaths of martyrs, nor the thrones of archangels: my request is, to be made holy: this is my highest concern. Rectify the disorder sin has made in my soul, and renew thy image there: let me be satisfied with thy likeness. Thou hast encompassed my path with mercy in all other respects, and I am discontented with nothing but my own heart, because it is so unlike the image of thy holiness, and so unfit for thy immediate presence.

Permit me to be importunate here, O blessed God, and grant the importunity of

my wishes: let me be favored with a gracious and speedy answer, for I am dying while I am speaking: the very breath with which I am calling upon thee is carrying away part of my life! this tongue, that is now invoking thee, must shortly be silent in the grave: these knees, that are bent to pay thee homage, and these hands, that are now lifted to the Most High God for mercy, must shortly be mouldering to their original dust: these eyes will soon be closed in death, which are now looking up to thy throne for a blessing. O! prevent the flying hours with thy mercy, and let thy favor outstrip the hasty moments.

Thou art unchanged, while rolling ages pass along; but I am decaying with every breath I draw: my whole allotted time to prepare for heaven, is but a point compared with thy infinite duration. The shortness and vanity of my present being, and the importance of my eternal concerns, join together to demand my utmost solicitude, and give wings to my warmest wishes. Before I can utter all my present desires, the hasty opportunity perhaps is gone, the golden minute vanished, and the season of mercy has taken its everlasting flight.

O God of ages! hear me speedily, and grant my request while I am yet speaking: my frail existence will admit of no delay: answer me according to the shortness of my duration, and the exigence of my circumstances. My business, of high importance as it is, yet is limited to the present now, the passing moment; for all the powers on earth cannot promise me the next.

Let not my pressing importunity, therefore, offend thee: my happiness, my everlasting happiness, my whole being is concerned in my success: as much as the enjoyment of God himself is worth, is at stake.

Thou knowest, O Lord, what qualifications will fit me to behold thee: thou knowest in what I am defective: thou canst prepare my soul in an instant to enter into thy holy habitation. I breathe now; but the next moment may be death: let not that fatal moment come before I am prepared. The same creating voice that said, "Let there be light, and there was light," can, in the same manner, purify and adorn my soul, and make me fit for thy own presence; and my soul longs to be thus purified and adorned. O Lord, delay not, for every moment's interval

is a loss to me, and may be a loss unspeakable and irreparable. Thy delay cannot be the least advantage to thee: thy power and thy clemency are as full at this present instant as they will be the next, and my time as fleeting, and my wants as pressing.

Remember, O eternal God, my lost time is for ever lost, and my wasted hours will never return: my neglected opportunities can never be recalled: to me they are gone for ever, and cannot be improved: but thou canst change my sinful soul into holiness by a word, and set me now in the way to everlasting improvement.

O let not the Spirit of God restrain itself, but bless me according to the fulness of thy own being, according to the riches of thy grace in Christ Jesus, according to thy infinite, inconceivable love, manifested in that glorious gift of thy beloved Son, wherein the fulness of the Godhead was contained: it is through his merit and mediation I humbly wait for all the unbounded blessings I want or ask for.

XXVI. ASPIRING AFTER THE VISION OF GOD
IN HEAVEN.

I BESEECH *thee, show me thy glory.* It was a mortal in a state of frailty and imperfection that made this bold but pious request, which I repeat on different terms: since none can see thy face and live, let me die to behold it. This is the only request I have to make, and this will I seek after, that I may behold the beauty of the Lord, not as I have seen it in thy sanctuary below, but in full perfection and splendor, as thou art seen by seraphs and cherubs, by angels and archangels, and the spirits of just men made perfect.

O my God, forgive my importunity: thou hast commanded me to love thee with all my heart, my soul, my strength, and hast by thy Spirit kindled the sacred flame in my breast. From this arises my present impatience: from hence the ardor of my desires springs. Can I love thee, and be satisfied at this distance from thee? Can I love thee, and not long to behold thee in perfect excellence and beauty? Is it a crime to press forward to the end for which I was created? All my

wishes, and my hopes of happiness, terminate in thee.

Does not the thirsty traveller pine for some refreshing stream? Would not the weary be at rest, or the wretched captive be free? and shall not my thirsty, weary, captive soul long for refreshment, liberty, and rest? I am but a stranger, a pilgrim here, and have no abiding-place: this is not my rest, my home; and yet, if thou hast any employment for me, though the meanest office in thy family, I will not repine at my stay.

But, O Lord, thou hast no need of such worthless services as I can pay thee: thy angels are spirits, thy ministers flames of fire: thousands of thousands stand before thee, and ten thousand times ten thousand minister unto thee: they attend thy orders, and fly at thy command. O deliver me from this burden of mortality, and I will serve thee with a zeal as pure and active as theirs.

I can speak of thy loving-kindness to the children of men in a very imperfect manner: but then I will join with the celestial choir in praising thee, and rehearse to listening

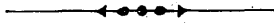
angels what thou hast done for my soul. Here I have a thousand interruptions from the delightful work: a thousand cold and darksome intervals, when my heart and tongue are both untuned: a thousand necessary distractions that rise from the miseries of mortality; but when these intervals of grief and sin shall cease, my soul shall dwell at ease, and be for ever glad, and rejoice in thy salvation.



XXVII. A SURRENDER OF THE SOUL TO GOD.

COMMAND me what thou wilt, O Lord: give me but strength to obey thee, be thy terms ever so severe. O let us never part. I resign my will, my liberty, my choice, to thee: I stand divested of the world, and ask only thy love as my inheritance. Give or deny me what thou wilt, I leave all the circumstances of my future time in thy hands: let the Lord guide me continually: here I am, do with me what seemeth good in thy sight: only do not say, Thou hast no pleasure in me. Let me not live to dishonor thee, to bring a reproach on thy name, to

profane the blood of the Son of God, and grieve the Spirit of grace. O take not thy loving-kindness from me, nor suffer thy faithfulness to fail. Thou hast sworn by thy holiness—and thou wilt not lie to the seed of thy servants—thou hast sworn that the generations of the righteous shall be blessed: vest me with this character, O my God, and fulfil this promise to a worthless creature.



XXVIII. TRUST AND RELIANCE ON THE DIVINE PROMISE.

O LET not my importunity offend thee, for it is the importunity of faith! It is my steadfast belief in thy word that makes me persist: thy word and thy oath, “the two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, give me strong consolation.”

'Tis this that makes me press forward to thy throne, and with confidence lay hold on thy strength, thy wisdom, and thy faithfulness, on thy goodness and tender compassion—those glorious attributes, for which “the children of men put their trust under the

shadow of thy wings." 'Tis thy glory to be the confidence of the ends of the earth, and it was long since predicted, "that in thy name the Gentiles should trust."

Kind Guardian of the world, our heavenly aid,
To whom the vows of all mankind are paid,

we pay thee the highest homage, and exalt thy infinite attributes by faith and confidence in thee.

I know that thou art, and believe thee, "a rewarder of them that diligently seek thee." I will never quit my hold of thy promises: there I fix my hopes: I will not let a tittle go, nor part with a mite of the glorious treasure: I humbly hope I have a rightful claim: thou art my God, and the God of my religious ancestors, the God of my mother, the God of my pious father: dying, and breathing out his soul, he gave me to thy care: he put me into thy gracious arms, and delivered me up to thy protection. He told me thou wouldst never leave nor forsake me: he triumphed in thy long-experienced faithfulness and truth, and gave his testimony for thee with his latest breath.

And now, O Lord God of my fathers, whose

mercy has descended from age to age, whose truth has remained unblemished and inviolable, and whose love remains without decay—O Lord, the faithful God, and the true, keeping covenant and mercy to a thousand generations, let me find that protection and blessing that the prayers of my dying father engaged for me: now, in the time of my distress, be a present help: and, if thou wilt this once deliver me, thou alone shalt be my future trust, my Counsellor, and hope: to thee I will immediately apply myself, and look on the whole force of nature as insignificant. To thee I will devote all the blessings thou shalt give me—my time, my life, my whole of this world's goods: whatever share thou shalt graciously allot me shall surely be the Lord's.

O! hearken to the vows of my distress, and for thy own honor deliver me from this perplexity, which thou knowest, and reveal to me the abundance of mercy and truth.

'Twas my dependence on thy promise and fidelity that brought me into this exigence. I staggered not at thy promises through unbelief, but boldly ventured on the credit of

thy word: I took it for my security; and can the Strength of Israel repent? Canst thou break thy covenant, and alter the thing that is gone out of thy mouth?

“O God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob! this is thy name for ever, and this thy memorial to all generations: the God before whom my fathers walked, the God that fed me all my life long till now,” bless me. Let the God of *Jacob* be my help, let the Almighty bless me: let the blessings of my father “prevail above the blessings of his progenitors, to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills.”

Bless me according to thine own greatness, according to the unsearchable riches of thy grace in Christ Jesus: he is the spring of all my hope, in whom all the promises of God are *yea* and *amen*: he is the true and faithful Witness, and has by his death sealed the divine veracity; and is become surety for the honor and faithfulness of the Most High God. To this also the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, beareth witness.

O! great Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! the Lord God Omnipotent! hear and grant my request, for the glory of thy mighty

name, that name which saints and angels bless and love: let thy perfections be manifested to the children of men: let them say, there is a God that judgeth in the earth: let them confess thou dost keep thy covenant with the seed of thy servants, that thy righteousness is from age to age, and thy salvation shall never be abolished: let them see and acknowledge, that in the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and his children have a place of refuge.

Unshaken as the sacred hill,
And firm as mountains be:
Firm as a rock the soul shall rest
That leans, O Lord, on thee.

MEMORANDUM.

This act of faith in God was fully answered, and I leave my testimony, that “the name of the Lord is a strong tower, and he knoweth them that put their trust in him.”



XXIX. APPLICATION TO THE DIVINE TRUTH.

HOWEVER intricate and hopeless my present distress may be to human views, why

should I limit the Almighty! or why should the Holy One of Israel limit himself? Nature and necessity are thine:—thou speakest the word, and it comes to pass: no obstacle can oppose the omnipotence of thy will, nor make thy designs ineffectual.

Is thy hand at all shortened since the glorious period when thy mighty power and thy stretched-out arm formed the heavens and earth—when these spacious skies were spread at thy command, and this heavy globe fixed on its airy pillars?

The strong foundations of the earth
Of old by thee were laid:
Thy hands the beauteous arch of heaven
With wondrous skill have made.

And “these shall wax old as a garment: as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed;” but shouldst thou, like these, decay, where were the hopes of them that confide in thee? If in all generations thy perfections were not the same, what consolation could the race of men draw from the ancient records of thy wonderful works? Why are we told, thou didst divide the sea, to make a path for thy people through the mighty waters! that thou didst

rain bread from heaven, and dissolve the flinty rock in crystal rills, to give thy chosen nation drink.

Thou art he that distinguished Noah in the universal deluge, and preserved the floating ark amidst winds, and rains, and tumultuous billows.

'Twas thy protecting care that led Abraham from his kindred and his native country, and brought him safely to the promised land.

Thou didst accompany Jacob in his journey to Padan-aram, and gave him bread to eat, and raiment to put on; till, greatly increased in substance, he returned to his father's house: he wrestled for a blessing, he wrestled with the Almighty, and prevailed.

With Joseph thou wentest down into Egypt, and didst deliver him out of all his adversities, till he forgot his sorrows, and all the toil of his father's house.

Thou didst remember thy people in the Egyptian bondage, and lookedst with pitying eyes on their affliction; and, after four hundred and thirty years, on the very day thou hadst promised, didst release and bring them

out with triumph and miracles. Thy presence went with them in a pillar of cloud by day, and a protecting fire by night: thy conquering hand drove out great and potent nations, and gave them entire possession of the land promised to their fathers; nor didst thou fail in the least circumstance of all the good things thou hadst promised.

What a cloud of witnesses stand on record: Joshua and Gideon, Jephthah and Samson, who, through faith, obtained promises.

Thou didst command the ravens to feed thy holy prophet; and, at the word of a prophet, didst sustain the widow's family with a handful of meal.

Thou didst walk with the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace: thou wast present with Daniel in the lions' den, to deliver him, because he trusted in thee.

In what instance has the prayer of faith been rejected? where were the righteous forsaken? who can charge God, without charging him foolishly? what injustice hath been found in the Judge of all the earth? His glorious titles have stood unblemished from generation to generation; nor can any

of his perfections decay, or rolling years make a change in the Ancient of days.

Are not his words clear and distinct, without a double meaning, or the least deceit? are they not such as may justly secure my confidence? such as would satisfy me from the mouth of man, inconstant man, whose breath is in his nostrils, and his foundation in the dust, unstable as water, and fleeting as a shadow! And can I so slowly assent to the words of the Most High? Shall I trust impotent man, that has neither wisdom nor might to accomplish his designs—that cannot call the next breath or moment his own, nor promise himself a moment in all futurity! Can I rest on these feeble props, and yet tremble and despond when I have the veracity of the eternal God to secure and support me?

I know he will not break his covenant, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. I dare attest it in the face of earth and hell, I dare stake my all for time and eternity on this glorious truth—a truth which hell cannot blemish, nor all its malice contradict.

Exert yourselves, ye powers of darkness, bring in your evidence, collect your instances,

begin from the first generations: since the world was peopled, and men began to call on the name of the Lord, when did they call in vain? when did the Holy One of Israel fail the expectation of the humble and contrite spirit? Point out in your blackest characters the dismal period when the name of the Lord was no more a refuge to them that trusted in him! Let the annals of hell be produced, let them mark the dreadful day, and distinguish it with eternal triumphs.

In vain ye search; for neither heaven, nor earth, nor hell, has ever been witness to the least deviation from truth or justice: the Almighty shines with unblemished glory, to the confusion of hell, and the consolation of those that put their trust in him.

On thy eternal truth and honor I entirely cast myself. If I am deceived, angels and archangels are deceived too: they, like me, have no dependence beyond the divine veracity for their blessedness and immortality: they hang all their hopes on his goodness and immutability: if that fails, the celestial paradise vanishes, and all its glories are extinct: the golden palaces sink, and the seraphic thrones must totter and fall. Where are

your crowns, ye spirits elect? where are your songs and your triumphs, if the truth of God can fail? A mere possibility of that would darken the fields of light, and turn the voice of melody into grief and lamentation.

What pangs would rise even through all the regions of blessedness! what diffidence and fear would shake the heart of every inhabitant! what agonies surprise them all, could the word of the Most High be cancelled! The pillars of heaven might then tremble, and the everlasting mountains bow: the celestial foundations might be removed from their place, and that noblest structure of the hands of God be chaos and eternal emptiness.

But for ever "just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints: blessed are all they that put their trust in thee;" for thou art a certain refuge in the day of distress, and under the shadow of thy wings I will rejoice. "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord, and triumph in his salvation: I called on him in my distress, and he has delivered me from all my fears. Hallelujah."

Here I dismiss my carnal hope,
My fond desires recall!
I give my mortal interest up,
And make my God my all.

XXX. GLORY TO GOD FOR SALVATION BY
JESUS CHRIST AND HIS BLOOD.

LET me give glory to God before I die, and take shame and confusion to myself. I ascribe my salvation to the free goodness of God: not by the strength of reason, or any natural inclination to virtue, but "by the grace of God I am what I am." O my Redeemer, be the victory, be the glory, thine! I expect eternal life and happiness from thee, not as a debt, but a free gift, a promised act of bounty. How poor would my expectations be, if I only looked to be rewarded according to those works which my own vanity, or the partiality of others, called *good*.

O Jesus, my Saviour, what harmony dwells in thy name! Celestial joy, immortal life is in the sound!

Sweet name! in thy each syllable
A thousand blest Arabias dwell:
Mountains of myrrh, and beds of spices,
And ten thousand paradises.

Let angels set this name to their golden

harps: let the redeemed of the Lord for ever magnify it.

O my propitious Saviour, where were my hopes but for thee? how separate, how undone, were my circumstances! I look on myself, in every view I can take, with horror and contempt. I was born in a state of misery and sin, and in my best estate am altogether vanity. With the utmost advantages I can boast, I shrink back, I tremble to appear before unblemished Majesty. O thou, in whose name the Gentiles trust, be my refuge in that awful hour. To thee I come, my only confidence and hope. Let the blood of sprinkling, let the seal of the covenant be on me, and cleanse me from my original stain and my contracted impurity.

O enter not into judgment with me, for the best actions of my life cannot bear thy scrutiny: some secret blemish has stained all my glory. My devotion to God has been mingled with levity and irreverence; and my charity to man with pride and ostentation. Some latent defect has attended my best actions, and those very things which, perhaps, have been highly esteemed by men, have deserved contempt in the sight of God.

“When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the cross of Christ my God:
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to thy blood.”



XXXI. A REVIEW OF DIVINE MERCY AND
FAITHFULNESS.

April 30, 1735.

I AM now setting to my seal that God is true, and leaving this as my last testimony to the divine veracity. I can, from numerous experiences, assert his faithfulness, and witness to the certainty of his promises: “The word of the Lord has been tried, and he is a buckler to all those that put their trust in him.”

“O come, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what he has done to my soul: I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker, and leave my record for a people yet unborn, that the generations to come may rise up and praise him.”

Into whatever distress his wise providence has brought me, I have called on the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears: I trusted in God, and he saved me. O let my experience stand a witness to them that hope in his mercy: let it be to the Lord for a praise and a glory.

I know not where to begin the recital of thy numerous favors. Thou hast hid me, in the secrets of thy pavilion, from the pride of man, and from the strife of tongues, when, by a thousand follies, I have merited reproach: thou hast graciously protected me, when the vanity of my friends, or the malice of my enemies, might have stained my reputation: thou hast covered me with thy feathers, and under thy wings have I trusted: thy truth has been my shield and my buckler: to thee I owe the blessing of a clean and unblemished name, and not to my own conduct, nor the partiality of my friends. Glory be to thee, O Lord!

Thou hast led me through a thousand labyrinths, and enlightened my darkness. When shades and perplexity surrounded me, my light has broken forth out of obscurity, and my darkness turned into noonday. Thou

hast been a guide and a father to me. When I knew not where to ask advice, thou hast given me unerring counsel: *The secret of the Lord has been with me, and he has shown me his covenant.*

In how many seen and unseen dangers hast thou delivered me! how narrow my gratitude! how wide thy mercy! how innumerable are thy thoughts of love! how infinite the instances of thy goodness! how high above the ways and thoughts of man!

How often hast thou supplied my wants, and by thy bounty confounded my unbelief! Thy benefits have surprised and justly reproached my diffidence: my faith has often failed, but thy goodness has never failed. The world and all its flatteries have failed, my own heart and hopes have failed, but thy mercy endureth for ever: thy faithfulness has never failed.

The Strength of Israel has never deceived me, nor made me ashamed of my confidence. Thou hast never been as a deceitful brook, or as waters that fail to my soul.

In loving-kindness, in truth, and in very faithfulness thou hast afflicted me. O! how unwillingly hast thou seemed to grieve me!

with how much indulgence has the punishment been mixed! Love has appeared through the disguise of every frown: its beams have glimmered through the darkest night: by every affliction thou hast been still drawing me nearer to thyself, and removing my carnal props, that I may lean with more assurance on the eternal Rock.

Thy love has been my leading glory from the first intricate steps of life: the first undesigning paths I trod were marked and guarded by the vigilance of thy love: O! whither else had my sin and folly led me!

How often have I tried and experienced thy clemency, and found an immediate answer to my prayers! Thou hast often literally fulfilled thy word: I have a fresh instance of thy faithfulness again: thou hast made me triumph in thy goodness, and given a new testimony to the veracity of thy promises.

And, after all, what ingratitude, what insensibility, reigns in my heart! O! cancel it by the blood of the covenant: root out this monstrous infidelity that still remains after the fullest evidence of thy truth. Thou hast graciously condescended to answer me

in thy own time and way, and yet I am again doubting thy faithfulness and care. *Lord, pity me. I believe: O help my unbelief.* Go on to succor, go on to pardon, and at last conquer my diffidence. Let me hope against hope, and, in the greatest perplexity, give glory to God, by believing what my own experience has so often found—"that the Strength of Israel will not lie; nor is he as man, that he should repent."

While I have memory and thought, let his goodness dwell on my soul. Let me not forget the depths of my distress, the anguish and importunity of my vows: when every human help failed, and all was darkness and perplexity, then God was all my stay. Then I knew no name but his; and he alone knew my soul in adversity. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

"Long as I live, I'll bless thy name,
My King, and God of love:
My work and joy shall be the same
In the bright worlds above."

I have yet a thousand and ten thousand deliverances to recount, ten thousand unasked-for mercies to recall: no moment of

my life has been destitute of thy care: no accident has found me unguarded by thy providence. Thou hast been often found unsought by my ungrateful heart, and thy favors have surprised me with great and unexpected advantages: thou hast compelled me to receive the blessings my foolish humor despised, and my corrupt will would fain have rejected. Thou hast stopped thy ears to the desires which would have ruined and undone me, when I might justly have been left to my own choice, for the punishment of my many sins and follies. How great my guilt! how infinite thy mercy!

Hitherto God has helped, and here I set up a memorial to that goodness which has never abandoned me to the malice and stratagems of my infernal foes, nor left me a prey to human craft or violence. The glory of his providence has often surprised me, when groping in thick darkness. With a potent voice he has said, "Let there be light, and there was light." He has made his goodness pass before me, and loudly proclaimed his name, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious:" to him be glory for ever.
Amen.

XXXII. SOME DAILY EXPERIENCES OF THE GRACIOUS METHODS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE TO ME, THE LEAST AND MOST UNWORTHY OF ALL THE SERVANTS OF MY LORD.

FIRST WEEK.*

I. EVERY day's experience reproaches my unbelief, and brings me some new evidence of thy faithfulness. Thou hast dispelled my fears, and, to the confusion of my spiritual foes, thou hast heard the voice of my distress. But a few hours ago I was trembling and doubting if thou wast indeed a God hearing prayer; and now I have a fresh instance of thy goodness, which, with a grateful heart, I here record. May the sense of thy benefits dwell for ever on my soul!

II. Thy mercies are new every morning: again thou hast given me an instance of thy truth. "I trusted in God, and he has delivered me: I will love the Lord, because he

* The division of these meditations into sevens, by the pious writer, seems to tell us that these were the devout thoughts of six weeks of her experience.

has heard the voice of my supplication; therefore will I call on him as long as I live."

III. "As for¹ God, his way is perfect: the way of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all that trust in him." He has punctually fulfilled the word on which I relied: bless the Lord, O my soul!

IV. Thy bounty follows me with an unwearied course: language is too faint to express thy praise: no eloquence can reach the subject. My heart is warm with the pious reflection: I look upward, and silently breathe out the unutterable gratitude that melts and rejoices my soul. I staggered at thy promise through unbelief, and yet thou hast graciously performed thy words. If we sometimes doubt or falter in our faith, yet he abideth faithful who has promised.

V. With the morning light my health and peace are renewed: the cheering influence of the sun, and the sweeter beams of the divine favor, shine on my tabernacle. Lord, why am I a ransomed, pardoned sinner? Why am I rejoicing among the instances of sovereign grace and unlimited clemency?

VI. I boasted in thy truth, and thou hast

not made me ashamed: my infernal foes are confounded, while my faith is crowned with success.

O who hath tasted of thy clemency
In greater measure, or more oft, than I?

VII. As the week begun, so it ends with a series of mercy: language and numbers fail to reckon thy favors, but this shall be my eternal employment.

When nature fails, the day and night
Divide thy works no more,
My ever thankful soul, O Lord,
Thy goodness shall adore.

SECOND WEEK.

I. I have seen the goings of God, my King, in his sanctuary; but O how transient the view! My sins turned back thy clemency, and yet I can celebrate the wonders of forgiving grace.

II. What do I owe thee, O thou great Preserver of men, for easy and peaceful sleep, for nights unmolested with pain and anxiety!

Thou round my bed a guard dost keep,
Thine eyes are open while I sleep.

Not a moment slides, in which I am unguarded by thy gracious protection.

III. Thanks be to God, who has given me the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ. Thou didst deliver me from the snare of the fowler, the craft and malice of hell, and kept me back from sinning against thee: be thine the victory and praise. *Hallelujah.*

IV. O Lord God of Israel, happy is the man that putteth his trust in thee. I left my burden at thy feet, and thou hast sustained me: my cares are dissipated, my desires are answered. "O who is a God like unto thee, near unto all that call on thee!"

V. Thy strength is manifest in weakness: "Not unto me, O Lord, but to thee be all the glory."

For ever thy dear, charming name
Shall dwell upon my tongue,
And Jesus and salvation be
The theme of every song.

This shall be my employment through an

eternal duration: 'tis that alone can measure my gratitude. The Lord Jehovah is my strength and salvation: he also shall be my song.

VI. Every day's experience confirms my faith, and brings a fresh evidence of thy goodness. Thou hast dispelled my fears, and, to the confusion of my spiritual foes, hearkened to the voice of my distress.

VII. I will love the Lord, who has heard my supplication. I made my boast in his faithfulness, and he has answered all my expectations.

THIRD WEEK.

I. My last exigence will be the closing part of life. O! remember me then, my God. Thou who hast led me hitherto, forsake me not at last. Be my strength when nature fails, and the flame of life is just expiring: let thy smiles cheer my gloomy hour: O! then let thy gentle voice whisper peace and ineffable consolation to my soul.

II. In six and seven troubles thou hast delivered me, "and been a covert from the

tempest, a hiding-place from the wind." Hitherto God has helped, and I have dwelt secure; and here I leave a memorial to thy praise, a witness against all my future distrust of thy faithfulness and truth.

III. Every day of my life increases the sum of thy mercies: the rising and the setting sun, in its constant revolution, can witness the renewal of thy favors. Thou wast graciously present in an imminent danger: by thee my bones have been kept entire, and thou hast not suffered me to dash my foot against a stone.

IV. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who heals thy diseases, and pardons all thy sins." O thou, the great Physician of my body, as well as of my distempered soul, thou hast restored and saved me from death and hell. Blessed Jesus, thou hast "taken my infirmities, and borne my sicknesses: the chastisement of my peace was upon thee, and by thy stripes I am healed."

V. I subscribe to thy truth, O Lord: I attest it in contradiction to infernal malice, to

all the hellish suggestions that would tempt my heart to diffidence and unbelief, even against repeated experience, against the fullest evidence of thy divine veracity.

VI. O! thou who never slumberest nor sleepest, this night thy watchful care has kept me from a threatening danger: thy eyes were open while I was sleeping secure beneath the covert of thy wings.

VII. Another and a greater deliverance has crowned the day: I have found thy grace sufficient in an hour of temptation: thy strength has been manifest in my weakness. Thine was the conquest, be the crown and the glory thine for ever. By thee I have triumphed over the stratagems of hell. "Not unto me, but to thy name, be the praise, O Lord."

FOURTH WEEK.

I. 'Tis not one of a thousand of thy favors I can record: but eternity is before me, and that unlimited duration shall be employed to rehearse the wonders of thy grace. Then in the great assembly I will praise thee: I will

declare thy faithfulness, and tell to listening angels what thou hast done for my soul, even for me, the least in thy family, unworthy to wipe the feet of the meanest of the servants of my Lord.

II. How numberless are thy thoughts of love to my soul! If I should count them, they are more than the sand on the shore. Thou hast again reprov'd my unbelief, and given me a new conviction that my whole dependence is on thee—that second causes are nothing, but as thou dost give them efficacy: all nature obeys thee, and is governed at thy command.

III. O my God, I am again ready to distrust thee, and call in question thy faithfulness. O! how deep has this cursed weed of infidelity rooted itself in my nature! but thou canst root it out.

IV. Again I must begin the rehearsal of thy mercies, which will never have an end; for thou dost renew the instances of thy goodness to a poor ungrateful sinner. Thou hast punctually fulfilled the promise on which I depended: thou hast granted the request of my lips, and led me in a plain way, that I have not stumbled.

V. This day I have received an unexpected favor. I doubted the success indeed, but thou hast gently rebuked my unbelief, and convinced me that all things are possible with thee, and that the hearts of the children of men are in thy hands.

VI. Whether thou dost favor or afflict me, I rejoice in the glory of thy attributes, in whatever instance they are displayed. Be thy honor advanced, whether in mercy or in justice, I must still assert the equity of thy ways, and ascribe righteousness to my Maker. Yet let me plead with thee, O my God, since mercy is thy darling attribute: O let it now be exalted: deal not with me in severity, but indulgence; for if thou shouldst mark what is amiss, who can stand before thee?

VII. Thou dost heal my diseases, and renew my life: thou art the guardian of my sleeping and my waking hours. Glory be to my God, whose eyes never slumber.

FIFTH WEEK.

I. Thou knowest my secret grief, where my pain lies, and what are my doubts and

difficulties. In thy wonted clemency, O Lord, dispel my darkness: leave me not to any fatal delusion in an affair of everlasting moment. This is my hour of information and practice: beyond the grave no mistake can be rectified: as the tree falls, so it must forever lie.

II. Thy goodness still pursues me, O heavenly Father, with an unwearied course: new instances of thy faithfulness reproach my unbelief: I sent up my petition with a doubting heart, and yet thou hast graciously deigned to encourage my weak and staggering faith, which has often wavered and failed, even in the view of the brightest evidence of thy power and truth.

III. Thou dost seem resolved to leave my unbelief without excuse, by renewing the glorious conviction of thy clemency and truth. O let not the unworthiness of the object turn back thy benignity from its natural course.

IV. How many unrecorded mercies have glided along with my fleeting moments into thoughtless silence and long oblivion! How prone is my ungrateful heart to forget thy benefits, or (O! amazing guilt) to make an ungrateful return.

V. O! never let my false heart relapse into distrust and unbelief again! Thou hast rebuked my folly, and put a new song of praise into my mouth: let those infernal suggestions vanish, that would once object against thy oft-experienced truth. In this I would still triumph and insult all the malice of hell. A time will come when thou shalt be glorified in thy saints, when thy truth and faithfulness shall appear in full splendor, when the beauty of thy attributes shall be conspicuous and clear from every blemish that the impiety of men, or the malice of devils, has charged on thy most righteous providence.

VI. Let me still assert that the ways of God are perfect justice and truth. I have a fresh instance of thy goodness to boast, and yet my ungrateful heart is even now ready to distrust. The Lord increase my faith: let thy renewed favors silence my unbelief, "to show that the Lord is upright: he is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him."

VII. Teach me your language, ye ministers of light, that I may express my wonder and gratitude. O thou, who canst explain the secret meaning of my soul, take the

praise that human words cannot express: accept those unutterable attempts to praise thee.

SIXTH WEEK.

I. Let me go on, O Most Holy, to record thy faithfulness and truth: let it be graven in the rock for ever: let it be impressed on my soul, and beyond the possibility of its being effaced. What artifice of hell is it that so often tempts me to distrust thee, and joins with my native depravity to question thy truth?

II. O! may I never forget this remarkable preservation: thy gentle hand supported me, and underneath were the everlasting arms. "Thou hast kept all my bones, not one of them is broken:" thy mercy upheld me, even when it foresaw my insensibility and ingratitude. How does my guilt heighten thy clemency! How wondrous is thy patience, O Lord, and thy rich grace, that only gently rebuked me, when thou mightest have taken severe vengeance on my sins!

III. Again I must begin the rehearsal of

thy love. Thou hast eased my pain, scattered my fears, and lengthened out my days. O! may my being be devoted to thee: let it be for some remarkable service that I am restored to health again.

IV. I find thy mercies renewed with my fleeting days, and to rehearse them shall be my glad employment. I trusted thee with my little affairs, and thou hast condescended to give me success. Lord, what is man, that thou thus graciously regardest him? Even my sins, my hourly provocations, cannot put a check to the course of thy beneficence: it keeps on in its conquering way, against all the oppositions of my ingratitude and unbelief; and hast thou not promised, O Lord, it shall run parallel with my life, and measure out my days?

V. Jesus, my never-failing trust, I called on thy name, and thou hast fully answered my hopes: let thy praise dwell on my tongue, let me breathe thy name to the last spark of life. Thou hast scattered my fears, and been gracious beyond all my hopes: my faint and doubting prayers have not been rejected; but O! how slow are my returns of praise, how backward my acknowledgments!

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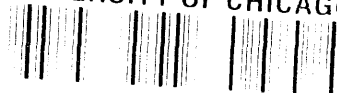
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